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ABSTRACT

This training module is comprised of two documents, the facilitator's guide and the student guide, and is intended for the introductory phase of a course for paraprofessional school personnel. The facilitator's guide provides the full text of the student's guide as well as chapter goals to be accomplished by students, topics covered in each text section, discussion questions, activities to be completed by students outside of class, resources (many in Minnesota), and materials appropriate for classroom use as transparencies. Individual chapters of both guides cover the following topics: (1) job roles and descriptions; (2) description of the work environment; (3) teamwork; (4) legal responsibilities; (5) communication; (6) learning styles; and (7) stress and burnout on the job. Four appendices provide an Individualized Education Plan form, information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium, a guide contrasting one-way and two-way communication, and guidelines for administering and interpreting the ELSIE, a test to identify preferred learning modalities. (Contains 14 references.) (DB)

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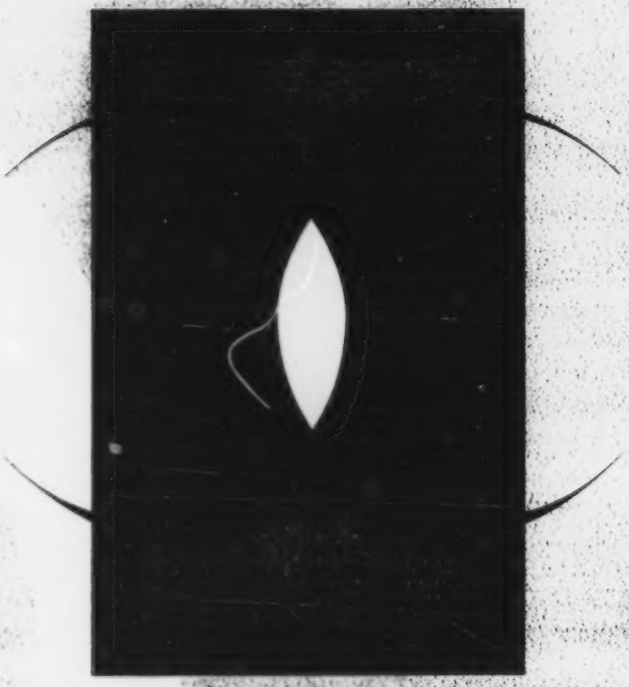

# The Paraprofessional
# An Introduction

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## Facilitator Edition

*Institute on Community Integration (UAP)*
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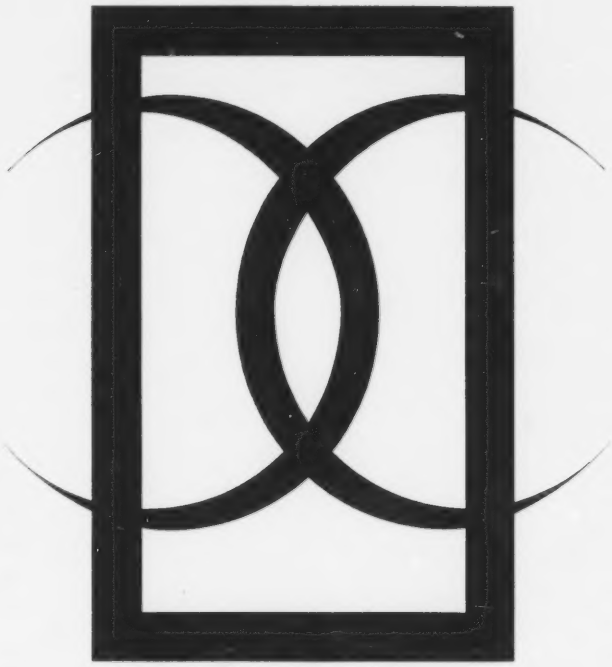

# The Paraprofessional
# An Introduction

## Facilitator Edition

*Institute on Community Integration (UAP)*

The College of Education & Human Development

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The paraprofessional training module *The Paraprofessional: An Introduction* was prepared at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

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*Institute on Community Integration Project Staff*
Teri Wallace, Project Director
Richard Weatherman, Project Director

*Hutchinson Technical College Project Staff*
Carol Adams, Training Specialist
Joyce Evenski, Instructor
Veronica Hansen, Instructor
Susan Rosenzweig, Instructor
Andi Upin, Instructor

Compiled by Jean E. Ness.
Edited by Nancy Krawetz.

*To request additional copies and alternative formats, contact —*
Publications Office
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612/624-4512

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# Facilitator's Outline

# *About the Facilitator's Outline*

- The following facilitator's outline is designed to assist instructors as they plan and prepare to teach the material contained in this module. The outline provides overviews of each chapter that include:
  - Chapter goals to be accomplished by students.
  - Topics to be covered in each section.
  - Discussion questions to facilitate lectures and discussions, and activities to be completed by students both in and out of class.

These items are the same as those appearing in the outside margins of the facilitator's edition of this module. The discussion and activity notes, and answers to activity questions, appear in the facilitator's edition only – they do not appear in the students' edition. The text, however, is the same in both. In some cases, the discussions and activities may have been abbreviated in this outline, but provide the same basic information as it appears within the context of the chapter.

This outline can be used when planning lessons. It's a good idea to read through the outline before using it for instruction in order to know what to expect and get a better sense of how the material is tied together.

The content of this module is based on a training series piloted in 1994 by Hutchinson Technical College in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Because of this, many references are specific to Minnesota's school and social service systems. We encourage instructors located in other states to replace the Minnesota-specific information with information more relevant to their state. We hope that facilitators will add their own experiences and stories to make this material "come alive."

# Chapter 1
# *Job Roles & Descriptions*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with the position of paraprofessional in a school and/or direct care facility.
- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with the supervisor of a paraprofessional in a school and/or direct care facility.

## Necessary Materials

- Transparency 1.1
- Overhead projector

## Section 1: Today's Paraprofessional

### Topics Covered

- Definition of a paraprofessional
- Settings in which paraprofessionals work

### Discussion 1

How is the role of the paraprofessional defined? In what settings do paraprofessionals work?

## Section 2: Roles & Responsibilities

### Topics Covered

- Roles/responsibilities of the teacher/supervisor
- Roles/responsibilities of the paraprofessional
- The role of the paraprofessional in actual daily practice

### Discussion 1

What are some of the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and their cooperating teachers and supervisors? How can paraprofessionals and teachers work together more effectively?

### Discussion 2

Discuss the three roles and responsibilities described in charts A, B, and C. Emphasize initiation and planning as the teacher or supervisor's role; the role of the paraprofessional is to carry out

those plans. Explain to students that in order for paraprofessionals to understand their roles well, they need to understand how they interrelate with their supervisor.

**Activity 1**

A good example of an activity to relate "my role," "your role," and "our role" is *What is My Role as a Paraprofessional?* Even though this exercise is based on an educational setting, all students can use it as a model for a way to work out job roles with a supervisor. Have students use the questions and interview their current supervisor. If they aren't currently in a paraprofessional position, they should interview someone in a setting in which they are interested.

**Activity 2**

Students will analyze their job roles using the *Daily Schedule* form as a guide. Students who aren't in a paraprofessional position should develop a schedule they think is realistic based on their interviews.

**Activity 3**

Students will fill out the *Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* and have a supervising teacher fill out the *Teacher Needs Preference Inventory*. Based on these two inventories, the students will complete the *Job Description for a Paraprofessional* checklist on page 12. Students should come to the next session prepared to discuss the job description they developed.

## Section 3: Characteristics of Successful Paraprofessionals

**Topics Covered**

- Characteristics of effective paraprofessionals
- Desirable behaviors of paraprofessionals

**Discussion 1**

What characteristics lead to the success of a paraprofessional? What do supervisors see as desirable for paraprofessionals?

**Activity 1**

Students will complete these questions outside of class and be prepared to discuss them in class. Depending on the nature and size of the group, it may be better to discuss their answers in small groups. Have students share their answers with the class.

# Chapter 2
# *Description of the Work Environment*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand the roles of key staff in school, vocational, and residential settings.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the hierarchical organizational structure of school, vocational, or residential environments.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the purposes of major community-based organizations and agencies that provide support to individuals with disabilities.

## Necessary Materials

- Overhead projector

## Section 1: Working with School Staff

### Topics Covered

- Regular classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- Adaptive physical education teacher
- Occupational/physical therapist
- School social worker
- Licensed school nurse
- Psychologist
- Building principal
- Lead teacher
- Certified classroom teacher
- Department head
- Superintendent

### Discussion 1

Discuss with students the roles of the school staff listed here. Ask them for other vital staff members that are involved. Relate these roles and the paraprofessional's role to the importance of team work discussed previously.

## Section 2: Working with Residential or Vocational Staff

### Topics Covered

- Occupational/physical therapist
- Psychologist
- Behavior analyst
- Job coach
- Qualified mental retardation professional
- Program director
- Medical professionals
- Social worker/county case manager
- Administrator
- House/program coordinator

### Discussion 1

Discuss with students the roles of the residential and vocational staff listed here. Ask them for other vital staff members that are involved. Relate these roles and the paraprofessional's role to the importance of teamwork that was discussed previously.

## Section 3: Where Paraprofessionals Fit into the System

### Topics Covered

- Organizational structure of a typical school system
- Organizational structure of typical residential/vocational settings

### Discussion 1

Discuss with students the responsibility and authority of each person on both charts. The purpose of the charts is to give paraprofessionals an overall idea of the scope of authority in a school district and a vocational/residential setting, how each is governed, and where the paraprofessional fits into each model. How do the individuals working in the school, residential, or vocational programs (discussed in Section 2) fit into these structures?

### Activity 1

Students will chart the hierarchy in their current or past workplaces. Encourage them to obtain organizational charts from their supervisors and compare them to they ones they make themselves. Have students bring their charts and share their findings during the next class session.

## Section 4: Community Agencies That Support Individuals with Disabilities

### Topics Covered

- The role of the Division of Rehabilitation Services
- The role of the Department of Health
- The role of the Department of Education
- The Department of Human Services
- Community mental health centers
- Parent/consumer advocacy groups
- Nongovernmental organizations

### Discussion 1

Discuss these agencies and organizations and their purposes. Add any others that students feel are important. Explain to students the roles and importance of these types of organizations in supplying support, funds and resources to schools, vocational, and residential environments.

### Discussion 2

Individuals with disabilities may not be eligible for or may not choose to access many of the support services described in this chapter. Who else can assist and support individuals in home, school, and community settings? Think of who you turn to for help and support in daily life.

### Activity 1

Students will collect brochures and pamphlets on area agencies that fit into the categories listed here and support individuals with disabilities and their families in some way. Ask them to call and/or interview agencies to find out what part they play in supporting individuals with disabilities in their community. Students should bring this information to the next session to share with others. They should ask for pamphlets or brochures for class members.

### Activity 2

One or more agency representatives will come to class to discuss their agency's role in supporting individuals with disabilities. This activity is strongly recommended as a way of giving students firsthand experience with agency representatives. Including several representatives, a panel discussion would be appropriate.

# Chapter 3
# *Teamwork*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe characteristics held by effective team members.
- Understand and describe the roles of team members who most commonly work with individuals with disabilities in a school, residential, and/or vocational setting.
- Identify and describe task, maintenance, and anti-group functions of a team.
- Identify and describe essential elements of effective teams.
- Recognize and understand plans used when developing individualized services for individuals with disabilities.

## Necessary Materials

- Transparencies – 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
- Overhead projector

## Section 1: What is Teamwork?

### Topics Covered

- Purpose of the team
- Characteristics of effective teams

### Discussion 1

What is the purpose of a team? Discuss the characteristics that must be present for effective teamwork.

### Activity 1

Students will discuss situations in which they were part of a team. Have them identify ways the characteristics listed here were either present or absent from that team, and what impact that had on the team.

## Section 2: Who Should Be on the Team?

### Topics Covered

- Role of the individual with a disability
- Role of the parents/families
- Role of the regular education teacher
- Role of the special education teacher

- Role of the therapist
- Role of the administrator

**Discussion 1**

Who are the essential team members you're likely to work with in school, residential, or vocational settings? What are their individuals' roles?

**Activity 1**

Ask students what other staff members should be added to this team for adult service settings, or in settings with which they are familiar.

**Activity 2**

Ask students to prepare a chart of the team members and their roles on the team in a site familiar to them for next session.

## Section 3: Functions of a Team

**Topics Covered**

- Explanation of task functions
- Explanation of maintenance functions
- Explanation of anti-group functions

**Discussion 1**

Discuss each of these task functions. Have students give examples of each. Relate team discussions to both education and direct service situations. Make sure students understand these are important functions for all members of the team to be aware of, regardless of their position on the staff.

**Activity 1**

Students will come up with examples of teams with which they've been involved or familiar and that worked well together.

**Activity 2**

Students will share specific examples of the maintenance functions paraprofessionals have used in team situations. Tell students that these behaviors are also important when working one-to-one with students/clients. Brainstorm with students how they can encourage others they work with to use these behaviors more frequently.

**Activity 3**

Students will give reasons they feel team members or coworkers engage in anti-group behavior. Ask for examples. Brainstorm ways to work with people with these types of behaviors. Ask students to relate times they have acted in "anti-group" ways and why.

**Activity 4**

Divide the class into groups of eight to ten students standing in a circle. Direct each person to reach across the circle and hold the hand of the person across from them. Then, with the other hand, reach across the circle and hold the hand of *another* person. Make sure everyone is holding the hand of two different people, so the group is tied in a knot. Tell the group that the object is to untangle themselves without letting go. How did they go about untangling the knots? What happened to the group as you began to untangle the knot? How did the group work together to untangle itself? What strategies did the group use to plan its untangling? What did you learn about solving complex problems in a group?

## Section 4: Essential Elements of Effective Teams

**Topics Covered**

- Interdependence: all for one and one for all
- Individual accountability
- Face-to-face interaction
- Collaborative skills
- Group processing

**Discussion 1**

Introduce these elements of effective teams and discuss them with the class. Discuss independence and interdependence and explain how important interdependence is in team efforts and how important accountability is in their job. Because they have to be so flexible and respond to many supervisors, it's extremely important for them to devise a way to keep track of who said what about whom. Lead a discussion of methods to keep one accountable. (i.e., a weekly plan with each supervisor to be evaluated at the end of the week; a calendar for the month with assignments agreed upon, etc.). Encourage students to develop a small team concept whenever possible so the interaction can be more personal and face-to-face. Explain the complex nature of collaboration and how difficult it can be without good communication. Stress the importance of setting up a good communications network with all members or the team and all supervisors. Encourage the students to request time from their supervisors to regularly evaluate team efforts always asking, "Is what we are doing working for the client/student? Are we all working together? Are we bringing in the paraprofessionals as an essential member of the team?"

## Section 5: What Paraprofessionals Need to Know to be Effective Team Members

### Topics Covered

- The job role of the paraprofessional on the team
- The responsibilities of the paraprofessional on the team
- Understanding the goals of the team
- Time commitment to participate on the team
- Communicating with the team

### Discussion 1

Discuss job roles, responsibilities, goals, time, communication, and the importance of each in the role of the paraprofessional in a team work situation. Encourage and allow discussion about these points. There might be a lot of discussion about how the paraprofessional doesn't feel a part of a team and isn't allowed to participate as an active team member.

### Discussion 2

Brainstorm with the group some positive steps they can take to become more equal members of teams. Brainstorm ideas of how a paraprofessional can be a member of a team meeting when the meetings are held at times they cannot attend (i.e., during bus duty, after or before hours). One solution could be for the paraprofessional to develop a written form with his or her supervisor to use to relay information about the individual being discussed that clearly addresses the paraprofessional's concerns and experiences about the individual.

## Section 6: The Individualized Planning Process

### Topics Covered

- The individualized planning process
- The role of the paraprofessional in the process
- The Individualized Education Plan
- The Individualized Family Service Plan
- The Individual Service Plan
- The Individual Community Support Plan
- The Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program

### Discussion 1

How are teams involved in individualized planning for students with disabilities? What plans are used to facilitate the individualized planning process?

**Discussion 2**

Refer students to the sample IEP from the Minnesota Department of Special Education (see Appendix A). Walk through the IEP, explaining how it is filled out and by whom. Depending on the group, you may want to assign roles (parent, paraprofessional, psychologist, student, etc.), role play the IEP process, and fill out the IEP form. Emphasize that the IEP process is an example of team participation. Ask the students, "What are the pitfalls of this team process?" Discuss the issues related to paraprofessionals being involved in the meetings. Allow students to air their feelings. Ask for some possible solutions. Relate the team process and the IEP format to the other individual plans listed.

# Chapter 4
# *Legal Responsibilities*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Recognize and understand the laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- Understand and describe what information must be kept confidential when working with individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Understand and describe the paraprofessional's responsibility regarding the abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

## Section 1: Laws that Protect the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities

### Topics Covered

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- The Americans with Disabilities Act

### Discussion 1

Why are laws such as IDEA and the ADA so important for individuals with disabilities? How have these laws changed the way services are delivered in schools and in residential and vocational settings?

## Section 2: Confidentiality

### Topics Covered

- Guidelines for confidential information
- Laws that relate to confidentiality

### Discussion 1

Why is it important to keep information regarding the individuals and families with whom you work confidential? What is the role of the paraprofessional in keeping such information confidential?

### Activity 1

Students will write a description of their organization's/school district's policy on how to handle confidential information. Students who are not currently in a paraprofessional position should contact a school or agency and ask about their policy. This should be turned in and discussed in the next class session.

## Section 3: Abuse & Neglect

### Topics Covered

- Physical abuse signs
- Emotional abuse signs
- Sexual abuse signs
- Laws that relate to abuse and neglect
- Characteristics of parents of abused or neglected children (Reading 1)
- Vulnerable adults (Reading 2)

### Discussion 1

Go over the physical and behavioral signs of abuse or neglect. Discuss the difficulty in identifying abuse or neglect in situations involving persons with disabilities. For example, an individual who experiences behavior challenges may display many of the characteristics as part of the disability, or an individual with a physical disability may fall often and have many bruises and scrapes. These are just examples to illustrate the complications of identifying abuse and neglect in individuals with disabilities. Have students discuss this and how to identify and report situations.

Discuss the emotional dilemma and value issues involved in reporting suspected abuse or neglect. Acknowledge how uncomfortable it can be to be caught in the middle among parents, families, and reporting agencies.

### Activity 1

Students will learn their organization's/school district's proce-

dure regarding abuse and neglect. Students who are not currently in paraprofessional positions should contact a school or agency and ask about their policy. This should be turned in and discussed in the next class session.

**Activity 2**

After discussing the signs of abuse, go through Reading 1, *What Can I Do to Prevent Harm to Children?*, which gives characteristics of parents of an abused or neglected child. Because paraprofessionals often have closer contact with families than others, they may be able to recognize situations that seem unhealthy or suspicious. Discuss this with the students. Explain how important it is for paraprofessionals to be knowledgeable about these characteristics in case they find themselves in situations that should be reported.

**Activity 3**

Refer students to Reading 2, *Vulnerability*, on page 45. Discuss the types of individuals this law covers and discuss the implications of this law for many of the individuals that students will work with in terms of their rights to protection.

# Chapter 5
# *Communication*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Recognize and identify personal communications strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand and describe barriers to communication and strategies to overcome them.
- Understand and describe roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working with families in a school, residential and/or vocational setting.
- Utilize a problem-solving technique to work collaboratively to solve a specific work-related problem.

## Necessary Materials

- Transparencies: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4
- Video: *Assertiveness Training for Professionals* by Dr. Helena Rode
- Overhead projector

## Suggested Materials

- Video: *Stress in the Healthy Family,* Delores Curran, Harper & Row, 55 minutes.
- Video: *Level with Me: Honest Communication,* Learning Seed, 330 Telser Rd, Lake Zurich, IL 60047, cat. 121VHS, 29 minutes.

## Section 1: Basic Communication Strategies

### Topics Covered

- Strategies for clear communication
- Barriers to communication
- Guidelines to consensus

### Discussion 1

What elements contribute to effective communication? What strategies can paraprofessionals and their supervisors use to enhance their communication?

### Activity 1

Have students draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. On the left, write "my strengths" and on the right "my weaknesses." Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses on the job, including your communication skills as you see them. Share this list with someone at work or a family member or friend. This assignment will be turned in and discussed in the next session.

### Discussion 2

Students will read *Twelve Barriers to Communication* and discuss these barriers in work, social, and personal settings.

## Section 2: Communication Styles

### Topics Covered

- Assertive communication
- Passive communication
- Aggressive communication
- Personal goal setting activity

### Activity 1

Ask for volunteers to do the following role play, one taking an aggressive approach, one a passive approach, and one an assertive approach. The fourth will act as the supervisor who will react to these situations. After the role plays, discuss which method of addressing the supervisor was the most effective. Encourage students to be assertive when resolving issues.

**Situation:** The school paraprofessional has just completed the first week on the job and is beginning to feel comfortable with the role, but on Friday is told that starting Monday he or she is to ride the bus with a very unruly bunch of students to maintain control. The paraprofessional feels totally unequipped to handle this role and doesn't know how to prepare. He or she goes to the supervisor to discuss the upcoming assignment. Have each student act out this situation with the supervisor. The passive person will say little and have a hard time expressing fears and concerns. The aggressive one will make demands. The assertive one will clearly state concerns, ask for proper support, and negotiate with the supervisor.

### Activity 2

Students will read and discuss the two charts *A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior,* and *Body Language and Voice.* Since manipulative behavior has not been discussed separately, ask students which category they feel manipulative behaviors most often fall within.

## Section 3: Communication with Families

### Topics Covered

- Tips for communicating with families
- Confidentiality issues regarding family communication
- Roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working with families

### Discussion 1

This section has been added to reinforce the importance of confidentiality, roles, and responsibilities. Remind students of these sections in the training. Encourage discussion of the difficulties that occur when the paraprofessional is put in the middle of situations between the individual's work setting and home. Brainstorm with students ways to avoid problems. Remind students what is and isn't their responsibility.

## Section 4: Good Communication with Supervisors

### Topics Covered

- Problem-solving techniques
- Problem-solving work session

### Discussion 1

How can these problem-solving strategies enhance communication between paraprofessionals and their supervisors?

**Activity 1**

The focus of the *Breakdown Checklist* and the *Solutions Checklist* is to promote a model for attacking *problems* rather than *people*. Students will choose a partner and, using the *Breakdown Checklist*, role play with a typical work issue such as the situation at the top of page 62.

**Activity 2**

Students will use the same situation (or another you make up) to work through the *Solutions Checklist*. After this exercise, ask students to share some reactions to the process of the exercises and some outcomes they had with their partners. Relate these outcomes to actual situations.

**Activity 3**

As homework for next session, provide students with additional copies of the worksheets to go through with their supervisor at work, a coworker, or a family member if they aren't in a work setting that would be appropriate. Tell students to be prepared to discuss the outcome at the next class session.

**Activity 4**

Students will do the activities in *One-Way & Two-Way Communication* found in Appendix C. Students will need a clean sheet of paper for the exercises (which appear in their editions of this module). After these exercises, discuss what happened. What was the communication like in the first exercise? How did that make the students feel? What was the difference between the feelings students had in the first exercise and the second exercise? Ask students what they feel caused the difference.

# Chapter 6
# *Learning Styles*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Recognize and understand characteristics of different learning styles in yourself and others.
- Recognize how your personal learning style affects the way you learn and/or teach others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of strategies to effectively teach students with different learning styles.

## Necessary Materials

- Transparency 6.1
- *ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory*
- Overhead projector

## Section 1: Identifying Your Personal Learning Styles

### Topics Covered

- Description of visual learners
- Description of auditory learners
- Description of kinesthetic or hands-on learners
- The *ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory*

### Discussion 1

How does learning style affect the way one learns and/or teaches others?

### Activity 1

The *ELSIE* inventory is being given as a way to learn more about learning styles in general and about a student's particular learning styles. The purpose of learning about personal learning styles is to be able to relate better to others and understand that all people do not learn or react to learning the same way. Spend enough time to make the purpose clear and alleviate any anxiety students might feel. The *ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory*, and instructions for administering and interpreting it, can be found in Appendix D.

## Section 2: How to Use Learning Style Information

### Topics Covered

- Strategies for working with "visual" learners
- Strategies for working with "written word" learners
- Strategies for working with "listening" learners
- Strategies for working with "activity" learners

### Discussion 1

Discuss strategies for working with students who have different learning styles. Ask for examples of strategies students use to accommodate for their own learning styles as well as those of others.

### Activity 1

Students will answer the questions in the *Putting the ELSIE to Work* activity. Ask them to share their responses. Discuss how this exercise can or will affect their interactions with individuals with whom they work.

# Chapter 7
# *Stress & Burnout on the Job*

## Chapter Goals

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the difference between stress and distress.
- Understand the stages of stress and burnout and recognize if and how it may affect people's lives.
- Understand and describe strategies for relaxation and handling stress and distress on and off the job.

## Necessary Materials

- Overhead projector
- Transparencies – 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

## Section 1: What is Stress?

### Topics Covered

- Factors that lead to stress
- *Stress* versus *distress*
- Body's reaction to stress
- Stages of burnout

### Discussion 1

What are some measures for handling stress on the job and at home? How can we learn the art of relaxation? How can friends be used to alleviate stress and help us relax?

### Activity 1

Students will read Section 1 and discuss how to get a handle on stress.

### Activity 2

Discuss the stages of burnout. Ask the group for examples of each stage. Ask for examples of healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with stress.

### Activity 3

Students will take the *Burnout Test.* After scoring it, discuss the significance of the results in terms of personal and work life.

## Section 2: Stress Management

### Topics Covered

- Strategies to deal with stress in life
- Tips to cope with stress on the job
- *My Stress List*
- What is relaxation?
- Secrets of relaxation
- Circle of friends

### Discussion 1

What are some measures for dealing with stress on the job and at home? How can we learn the art of relaxation? How can friends be used to alleviate stress and help us relax?

### Activity 1

Students will read *What is Relaxation?* and discuss the points that can be used to help relieve stress and burnout through relaxation.

### Activity 2

Tell students that one of the best ways to alleviate stress and burnout is to have a good circle of friends. Have them do the *Circle of Friends* activity as a closing activity to Module 1. This is a way to identify one's friends and those people on whom one can rely in times of stress. Friends offer benefits like:

- Personal development
- Career productivity and success
- Improved quality of life
- Improved physical and psychological health
- Help dealing constructively with stress
- Self-actualization

Tell students to fill in the circles starting from the center, where they should put themselves. In circle 2 they should put those who are closest to them and will always be there for them. In circle 3 they should put friends who aren't as close but are still important. Have them put acquaintances in circle 4 and paid helpers in the outermost circle (number 5).

After students finish, ask how this information can relate to their ability to deal with stress. Who in their circles can they turn to in times of stress? Why? Tell students to refer to these circles when they feel under stress and remember that friends are a viable way to deal with stress.

# Introduction

# *An Introduction to the Curriculum*

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

By employing paraprofessionals, educational and other services for persons with disabilities are able to expand and improve the quality of assistance they provide. Some of the benefits paraprofessionals offer schools, agencies, and individuals with disabilities are the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- More individualized instruction.
- Increased planning time for educators, supervisors, and others.
- Better monitoring and evaluation of persons with disabilities.
- Greater consistency in services.
- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

## The Role of Today's Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- Who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

**To the Facilitator**

Be sure to have current state legislation, definitions, and guidelines to share with participants. They should be familiar with the resources existing to support their work.

NOTE: *This same introduction also appears in Chapter 1 of this module.*

Paraprofessionals provide services in the following areas:

- Educational programs
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Recreation programs
- Early intervention and preschool programs
- Social work/case management
- Parent training/child-find programs
- Vocational training programs and job coaching
- Community programs
- Transition and school-to-work

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification required for the job, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required.

Because the support of paraprofessionals is so essential to the success of individuals with disabilities, this module is dedicated to improving and enhancing skills for paraprofessionals.

**Activity 1**

Have students get in groups to discuss their experiences in paraprofessional roles and the changes they have seen. Those students who haven't worked as paraprofessionals can share their beliefs about para roles. Organizing the groups to include both types of participants will increase understanding of the type of roles paraprofessionals have. NOTE: *This same activity also appears in Chapter 1 of this module.*

Information in *The Role of Today's Paraprofessional* adapted from: Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

## About the Module

Whether you have years of experience working with persons who have disabilities or are just beginning, there are probably many questions you have about the role of a paraprofessional. Some concerns and questions will be very specific to your work setting, while others will be more general. This module will cover both.

This curriculum is primarily for paraprofessionals who are (or will be) working in educational settings (i.e., special and general education). It will, however, also be useful for those in direct service settings, such as vocational programs and residential settings.

The training you are about to begin will not only address the current reality for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities, but more importantly, the challenges for the future in your career as a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals aren't expected to have a total understanding of all the concepts in these modules, but the paraprofessional who has a working knowledge of these core concepts will be most effective.

## Philosophy and Key Beliefs

This module was developed using a general philosophy including six key beliefs for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities. Those beliefs include:

- The individual with a disability is the ultimate locus of control and is the most important member in the decision-making process.
- The family is the other primary locus of control. Family involvement is essential in any decision-making process.
- The team concept is essential in setting up a plan with an individual. This team includes the individual, the family, and all those working with the individual, including the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional is an essential link between what is and what can be for the individual. The best follow-through on any plan comes from teamwork.
- The community should be the basis for all training, as much as possible. This means that, whether offering real-life examples in the classroom or working in real life situations in the community, the focus must be on the most natural setting and support possible. This is essential so the individual can make connections between what is being learned on a daily basis and the real world. This will help the individual generalize the experience to similar situations in his or her life.
- Inclusion is the goal. This means that individuals with disabilities should be included in the mainstream of society – work, school, and recreation. Devotion to such a model will create the most positive results for the individuals and society as a whole. Inclusion suggests that we can and will all benefit by learning to work and live side by side with each other.
- The most effective paraprofessional will be the individual who has a good self-esteem and is able to be assertive. The assertive paraprofessional is able to ask for support and guidance from staff.

## Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

The Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium has recently developed and published some important information related to paraprofessionals, including new legislation, guiding principles, and core and specialized competencies. This information can be found in Appendix B at the back of this module. While some of the information is specific to Minnesota, much of it is applicable to paraprofessionals across the country.

**Discussion 1**

Review with students the information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium, found in Appendix B. Be sure to discuss the new core competencies and how paraprofessionals can incorporate them into their daily work lives.

## After the Training

You will leave this training with more information about paraprofessionals than you had when you started. It's important to remember that no matter how much knowledge you have about your job, the individuals you work with are your greatest trainers. Each one is unique and has his or her own interests and needs. The greatest responsibility you have is to listen to those interests and needs, remember what you have learned, ask what is needed, and use that information in your working relationship and responsibilities.

Therefore, use this training as a basis and build your skills from this point, drawing upon each setting and individual. Whether consumer, student, teacher, supervisor, principal, director, or superintendent, you will learn from each. With each setting and situation, your confidence, ability, and skills will continue to grow. Remember, this training is only as good as the degree to which you use what you learn; seek assistance so you can "do what you know."

# 1

## *Chapter One*

# Job Roles & Descriptions


1 Introduction

1 Section 1: Today's Paraprofessional

2 Section 2: Roles & Responsibilities

14 Section 3: Characteristics of Successful Paraprofessionals

17 Summary

17 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

By employing paraprofessionals, educational and other services for persons with disabilities are able to expand and improve the quality of assistance they provide. Some of the benefits paraprofessionals offer schools, agencies, and individuals with disabilities are the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- More individualized instruction.
- Increased planning time for educators, supervisors, and others.
- Better monitoring and evaluation of persons with disabilities.
- Greater consistency in services.
- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with the paraprofessional position in school, work, and community settings.
- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with supervisors of paraprofessionals in schools or direct service and community environments.

**To the Facilitator**

Be sure to have current state legislation, definitions, and guidelines to share with participants. They should be familiar with the resources existing to support their work.

## Section 1
# *Today's Paraprofessional*

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

**Discussion 1**

How is the role of the paraprofessional defined? In what settings do paraprofessionals work?

**Show Transparency 1.1**

**Activity 1**

Have students get in groups to discuss their experiences in paraprofessional roles and the changes they have seen. Those students who haven't worked as paraprofessionals can share their beliefs about para roles. Organizing the groups to include both types of participants will increase understanding of the type of roles paraprofessionals have.

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- Who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

Paraprofessionals provide services in the following areas:

- Educational programs
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- Social work/case management
- Parent training/child-find programs
- Vocational training programs and job coaching
- Community programs
- Transition and school-to-work

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification required for the job, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required.

Because the support of paraprofessionals is so essential to the success of individuals with disabilities, this module is dedicated to improving and enhancing skills for paraprofessionals.

Section 1 material adapted from Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

# Section 2
# *Roles & Responsibilities*

**Discussion 1**

What are some of the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and their cooperating teachers and supervisors? How can paraprofessionals and teachers work more effectively?

Look at the following charts describing the differences in professional and paraprofessional roles. Notice that in each case, the professional initiates the plan while the paraprofessional assists in implementing it.

If you are (or will be) in a direct service setting, adapt this model to make a chart of your duties.

## Chart A: The Teacher/Adult Supervisor's Roles

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Plans weekly schedule.<br>• Plans lessons/activities for entire group and modifies for individual needs.<br>• Sets and/or maintains records where all team members have access and input.<br>• Communicates all decisions, plans, policies, and instructions.<br>• Communicates needs/situations of individuals which affect their safety and welfare. |
| **Assessments** | • Assesses individuals.<br>• Administers tests. |
| **Objectives** | • Determines appropriate objectives. |
| **Instruction** | • Gives instruction for the entire group, small groups and individuals. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Plans behavior management strategies for groups and individuals. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Meets with parents.<br>• Initiates conferences concerning planning and review. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Develops and implements individual plan.<br>• Communicates with all team members. |

## Chart B: The Paraprofessional's Roles

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Implements plan under direct supervision of teacher or supervisor. |
| **Assessments** | • Assists with monitoring or scoring. |
| **Objectives** | • Implements lessons to meet objectives. |
| **Instruction** | • Teaches small group and individual sessions. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Implements behavioral strategies using the same emphasis and techniques as the teacher or supervisor. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Communicates with parents in coordination with teacher/supervisor. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Carries out individualized plans. |

### Discussion 2

Discuss the three roles and responsibilities described in charts A, B, and C. Emphasize initiation and planning as the teacher or adult services supervisor's role; the role of the paraprofessional is to carry out those plans. Explain to students that in order for paraprofessionals to understand their roles well, they need to understand how they interrelate with their supervisor.

## Chart C: The Paraprofessional's Role in Daily Practice

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Paraprofessionals make daily accommodations and modifications for individuals getting approval from supervisor.<br>• Paraprofessionals may keep daily progress records.<br>• Paraprofessionals talk through decisions, plans, and strategies with teacher/supervisor.<br>• Paraprofessionals communicate daily and regular needs of individuals. |
| **Assessments** | • Paraprofessionals may do daily monitoring and report results and observations. |
| **Objectives** | • Paraprofessionals help determine objectives and updates status of the objectives based on daily contacts. |
| **Instruction** | • Paraprofessionals may provide direct instruction and report results. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Paraprofessionals help determine appropriate strategies based on daily contact with individuals.<br>• The team modifies students' environments as needed based on daily contact. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Paraprofessionals may communicate regularly with parent about transportation (bus aide, etc.) and report information back to teacher/supervisor. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Paraprofessionals may participate actively on students' teams, communicating daily activities, changes, and needs of the individual. |

## What is My Role as a Paraprofessional?

One of the first opportunities to use your assertive skills is in finding out just exactly what your job role and functions are. Here are some questions to ask to find out about your role:

1 What are my regular/special duties for the day?

2 What is my daily routine or schedule to be?

3 What records am I responsible for keeping?

4 What resources are available to me for extra support?

5 What are the emergency procedures?

6 What is the schedule or routine for the individuals with whom I will be working?

7 What are the most significant safety regulations I must know?

8 Where are supplies kept and who has access to them?

9 What equipment is available and how do I gain access to it?

### Activity 1

A good example of an activity to relate "my role," "your role," and "our role" is *What is My Role as a Paraprofessional?* Even though this exercise is based on an educational setting, all students can use it as a model for a way to work out job roles with a supervisor. Have students use the questions and interview their current supervisor. If they aren't currently in a paraprofessional position, they should interview someone in a setting in which they are interested.

10 What line of communication and authority should I follow?

11 Do I have more than one person supervising me and giving me direction? How is my time divided? Who is my supervisor?

12 What client/student records are available to me?

13 What student/client information must I keep confidential?

14 What student/client information can I share and with whom?

15 What should I do if a student/client tells me he or she has been abused or if I suspect abuse has occurred?

16 To whom should I bring questions concerning policy issues?

17 If I have interpersonal problems on the job, to whom should I go?

18 What kind of communication and relationships should I have with clients'/students' parents?

19 What is expected of me in terms of discipline?

20 How do those on staff view the role of paraprofessional?

## Daily Schedule

**Directions:** Use this form to analyze your current schedule. If you aren't currently in a paraprofessional position, develop a schedule you think would be realistic. Record the time required for each activity, then describe the paraprofessional's and the teacher's/supervisor's role in the appropriate space.

| A.M. Time | Paraprofessional Activity | Teacher Activity |
|---|---|---|
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |

| P.M. Time | Paraprofessional Activity | Teacher Activity |
|---|---|---|
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |

*Daily Schedule* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

**Activity 2**

Students will analyze their job roles using the *Daily Schedule* form as a guide. Students who aren't in a paraprofessional position should develop a schedule they think is realistic based on their interviews.

**Activity 3**

Students will fill out the *Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* and have a supervising teacher fill out the *Teacher Needs Preference Inventory*. Based on these two inventories, the students will complete the *Job Description for a Paraprofessional* checklist on page 10. Students should come to the next session prepared to discuss the job description they developed.

## Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory

**Directions:** Paraprofessionals should fill out this inventory to describe their current job responsibilities. For each of the responsibilities below, check the box that most closely reflects your role.

| I'll do this now. | I'll try with support. | I can't do this. |
|---|---|---|
| **Instructional Support** | | |
| Observe and record student progress. | | |
| Help students practice math to reinforce lessons. | | |
| Help students with assignments. | | |
| Help with listening activities. | | |
| Modify written materials to meet student needs. | | |
| Read to students. | | |
| Tape record lessons and assignments. | | |
| Help students work on projects assigned in regular classroom. | | |
| Assist students with self-help skills (grooming, etc.). | | |
| Help plan daily activities for students. | | |
| Assist in developing behavioral objectives. | | |
| Assist in testing students. | | |
| Talk with students about careers. | | |
| Accompany students to community training sites. | | |
| Assist students in learning transportation skills. | | |
| Support students in learning job skills. | | |
| Help non-English speaking students with vocabulary. | | |
| Attend IEP Meetings. | | |
| **Resource Support** | | |
| Help find materials needed for teaching. | | |
| Help develop learning centers. | | |
| Help manage learning centers. | | |
| Prepare classroom displays. | | |
| Make bulletin board displays. | | |
| Make instructional games. | | |
| Help order materials and supplies. | | |
| Organize supplies in classroom. | | |
| Put lessons on chalkboard. | | |
| Operate tape recorders, videotape players, etc. | | |
| Set up and run filmstrips, films, and overhead. | | |
| Make visual aids (transparencies, posters, etc.) | | |
| Schedule guest speakers. | | |

*Continued*

**Classroom Organizational Support**

Supervise students on arrival or departure.
Supervise students during lunch.
Supervise students during recess.
Supervise students loading buses.
Work with general education teachers to help include students.
Escort students to bathroom, library, etc.
Accompany students to physical therapy, etc.
Help contact parents (send notes, progress reports).
Get materials ready for activities (mix clay, etc.).
Help prepare and clean up snacks and lunch.
Help students clean up after activities.
Distribute supplies and books to students.
Collect completed work.
Assist students with health needs.
Prepare and arrange room for the teacher.

**Behavior Management Support**

Supervise time-out.
Observe and chart student behavior.
Give positive reinforcement and support.
Manage conflicts between students.
Provide close supervision for students with challenging behaviors.
Circulate in classroom to provide support.
Make sure class and school rules are followed.
Assist students who are self-managing behavior.
Help students develop organizational skills.

**Clerical Support**

Take attendance.
Type reports, tests, seat work.
Operate copier, fax, etc.
Sort and file student papers.
Record grades.
Collect fees, i.e. book, milk, activity, etc.
Correct assigned student lessons.
Grade and record objective tests.
Help with paperwork to facilitate parent-teacher appointments. Inventory materials/fill out forms.
Arrange field trips.

*Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Teacher Needs Preference Inventory

**Directions:** Teachers/supervisors should fill out this inventory to describe their current job responsibilities. For each of the responsibilities below, check the box that most closely reflects your role.

| I need this done. | I'll help with this. | I'll do this. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Instructional Support** |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Observe and record student progress. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help students practice math to reinforce lessons. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help students with assignments. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help with listening activities. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Modify written materials to meet student needs. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Read to students. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Tape record lessons and assignments. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help students work on projects assigned in regular classroom. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Assist students with self-help skills (grooming, etc.). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help plan daily activities for students. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Assist in developing behavioral objectives. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Assist in testing students. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Talk with students about careers. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Accompany students to community training sites. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Assist students in learning transportation skills. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Support students in learning job skills. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help non-English speaking students with vocabulary. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Attend IEP Meetings. |
| | | | **Resource Support** |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help find materials needed for teaching. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help develop learning centers. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help manage learning centers. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Prepare classroom displays. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Make bulletin board displays. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Make instructional games. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Help order materials and supplies. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Organize supplies in classroom. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Put lessons on chalkboard. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Operate tape recorders, videotape players, etc. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Set up and run filmstrips, films, and overhead. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Make visual aids (transparencies, posters, etc.) |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Schedule guest speakers. |

*Continued*

**Classroom Organizational Support**

Supervise students on arrival or departure.
Supervise students during lunch.
Supervise students during recess.
Supervise students loading buses.
Work with general education teachers to help include students.
Escort students to bathroom, library, etc.
Accompany students to physical therapy, etc.
Help contact parents (send notes, progress reports).
Get materials ready for activities (mix clay, etc.).
Help prepare and clean up snacks and lunch.
Help students clean up after activities.
Distribute supplies and books to students.
Collect completed work.
Assist students with health needs.
Prepare and arrange room for the teacher.

**Behavior Management Support**

Supervise time-out.
Observe and chart student behavior.
Give positive reinforcement and support.
Manage conflicts between students.
Provide close supervision for students with challenging behaviors.
Circulate in classroom to provide support.
Make sure class and school rules are followed.
Assist students who are self-managing behavior.
Help students develop organizational skills.

**Clerical Support**

Take attendance.
Type reports, tests, seat work.
Operate copier, fax, etc.
Sort and file student papers.
Record grades.
Collect fees, i.e. book, milk, activity, etc.
Correct assigned student lessons.
Grade and record objective tests.
Help with paperwork to facilitate parent-teacher appointments. Inventory materials/fill out forms.
Arrange field trips.

*Teacher Needs Preference Inventory* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Job Description for the Paraprofessional

**Directions:** Based on the results of the *Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* and the *Teacher Needs Preference Inventory*, write a job description that you feel would be appropriate for a paraprofessional or for you.

### 1 Instructional Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

### 2 Resource Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

### 3 Classroom Organization Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

**4 Behavior Management Duties**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

**5 Clerical Duties**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

*Job Description for the Paraprofessional* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Section 3
# *Characteristics of Successful Paraprofessionals*

**Discussion 1**

What characteristics foster successful paraprofessionals? What behaviors do supervisors see as desirable for paraprofessionals?

There are many characteristics that are seen by directors of special education, superintendents, facilitators, supervisors, and paraprofessionals themselves as important for being successful as a paraprofessional. Some of those characteristics are:

- Adaptability
- Dependability
- Cooperativeness
- Tolerance
- Resourcefulness
- Versatility
- Intelligence
- Experience with children
- Energy
- Creativity

If an individual with a disability, a family, or a school or agency staff member could have their "dream list" of expectations of a paraprofessional, these are at least some of the desired behaviors (look at these as goals for yourself):

- Has a positive attitude toward the organization/school and the personnel.
- Enjoys the students/clients.
- Respects the students/clients.
- Is sensitive to the needs of students/clients.
- Is dependable, prompt, and reliable (doesn't miss work often).
- Is discreet about confidential information.
- Is able to share perceptions of individuals with teachers or supervisors.
- Is able to give assistance without being asked.
- Uses common sense.
- Is a liaison between the work setting and the community by interpreting community values and concerns in the setting and the concerns in the community at large.
- Is eager to participate in training to further skills as a paraprofessional.
- Believes in the team concept of cooperative work.

- Is eager to involve the individual in the community.
- Is assertive in team and work situations.
- Is able to identify the needs of the individual and express them to the appropriate person.
- Is an advocate in behalf of individuals with disabilities.

It would be perfect to have a staff that all shared the above traits. It would also be ideal to start a job with a clear and concise job description. The reality is often quite different from this. In many cases, the paraprofessional starts the job with only a vague understanding of the rules, regulations, and the tasks he or she is responsible for, and even less understanding of the unique needs of the client/student population in the setting. Even in the best of settings, you cannot be expected to know everything.

## Personal Goal-Setting Activity

One important way to apply what you learn in this class is to relate your needs and wants to personal long-term or short-term goals.

A short-term goal might be for you to complete this class. A long-term goal might be for you to complete a four-year college degree. Think of a goal (either long-term or short-term, either personal or professional) and how you plan to accomplish it:

- What is your goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

- In what ways could you pursue this goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

- What would be the ideal outcome of meeting this goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Activity 1**

Have students complete these questions outside of class and be prepared to discuss them in class. Depending on the nature and size of the group, it may be better to discuss their answers in small groups. Have students share their answers with the class.

- What could prevent you from reaching this goal?

- What are your rights in this situation?

- What are the rights of others?

- Now make an action plan to achieve your goals:
  *The steps I will take to achieve this goal:*

# *Summary*

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required for the job. Responsibilities of paraprofessionals vary greatly depending on the individuals with whom they work, and the setting in which their job takes place. More and more, paraprofessionals can be seen working alongside individuals with disabilities in education and community-based settings.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- Are the responsibilities of your current job in line with those outlined in the charts on pages 3 and 4?
- How would you go about redefining your job with your supervisor if you felt you were doing more "supervisory" tasks than appropriate based on your training and education?

# 2

## *Chapter Two*

# Description of the Work Environment


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19 Section 1: Working with School Staff

21 Section 2: Working with Residential or Vocational Staff

23 Section 3: Where Paraprofessionals Fit into the System

24 Section 4: Community Agencies That Support Individuals with Disabilities

25 Summary

25 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

Along with understanding your role and job description, it is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of others on staff. This is essential for effective teamwork. It is also very useful in helping you understand how you fit into the entire "scheme" of the organization.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and understand roles of key staff in a school, vocational, or residential setting.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the hierarchical and organizational structure of school, vocational, or residential environments.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the purposes of major community-based organizations and agencies that provide support to individuals with disabilities.

## Section 1
## *Working with School Staff*

If you're in an educational setting, you may work directly or come in contact with some of the following professionals:

**General Education Teacher**

The role of the general education teacher is largely teaching the regular lessons. You may be responsible with general educators on adapting and explaining curriculum and assigning work for students to accomplish either as part of the class or separately based on individual needs.

**Special Education Teacher**

Special education teachers have the background and training to set up specific plans to meet students' educational needs. She or he may be the paraprofessional's immediate supervisor and may determine the daily/weekly responsibilities the paraprofessional will perform with students.

**Adaptive Physical Education Teacher**

Some schools have a physical education teacher who designs exercise and activities to meet the needs of individual students. This may be common with students with physical disabilities.

**Occupational Therapist & Physical Therapist**

Students with disabilities may spend time individually with an

**Discussion 1**

Discuss with students the roles of the school staff listed here. Ask them for other vital staff members that are involved. Relate these roles and the paraprofessional's role to the importance of team work discussed previously.

occupational or physical therapist. The role of this specialist is to collaborate with staff to design therapeutic procedures that will help students become more independent physically.

- **Physical therapists** work with ambulation (walking), modalities (senses), and cardiorespiratory functioning.
- **Occupational therapists** work with fine motor and perceptual skills, sensory integration, cognitive and psychosocial aspects of performance, and adaptive devices related to daily activities.

**School Social Worker/Case Manager**

The school social worker is often the person on staff who has family information and an understanding of the blend of needs between the school and home. The social worker is an excellent resource for background information on the student's family life. Not all schools have social workers on staff.

**Licensed School Nurse**

The licensed school nurse is responsible for dispensing medications and assisting in meeting a student's medical needs.

**Psychologist**

The psychologist may be involved in team planning for the individual on a behavior plan, or other specific needs relating to behavior or psychological testing. Psychologists are licensed to test students to determine their level of intellectual functioning. They may also offer counseling and support to students with emotional or behavioral difficulties.

**Building Principal**

The principal is the head administrator of a school and sets policy for staff and rules for students. This is the person the paraprofessional would ultimately address building/policy concerns to. The principal supervises all school staff.

**Lead Teacher/Department Head**

The lead teacher is responsible for coordinating the activities of other teachers in the same subject area. She or he may set schedules, determine who teaches what, and schedule a paraprofessional's time with various teachers and/or students. This is the person responsible for setting policy in a program area, determining assignments for teachers, and often, determining program need or individual need for paraprofessionals. Not all schools have lead teachers.

**Superintendent**

The superintendent is responsible for all policy and programming throughout an entire school district. She or he is ultimately responsible to the school board.

**Vocational Education Teacher**

The vocational education teacher is the individual who is qualified to teach a vocationally specific set of information.

# Section 2
# *Working with Residential or Vocational Staff*

If you are employed in a direct service setting, the following are some of the people with whom you may work:

**Occupational Therapist & Physical Therapist**

The individual with disabilities may spend time individually with an occupational or physical therapist. The role of this specialist is to collaborate with staff to develop ways to integrate the individual into "normal" settings as much as possible, do proper positioning and handling procedures, and use adaptive equipment.

- **Physical therapists** usually have additional skill in the use of ambulation, modalities, and cardiorespiratory functioning.
- **Occupational therapists** also have skills in developing activities in fine motor and perceptual skills, sensory integration, cognitive and psychosocial aspects of performance, as well as use of adaptive devices related to daily activities.

**Psychologist**

The psychologist conducts assessments to determine disability, which will enable the individual to access services. A psychologist also may be used as a consultant for the development of a behavior support program for an individual. Sometimes the psychologist will become involved in various forms of adult, family, or individual counseling.

**Behavior Analyst**

A behavior analyst may design strategies to help individuals maintain socially acceptable behavior in a variety of community settings.

**Qualified Mental Retardation Professional**

The term *Qualified Mental Retardation Professional* (QMRP) comes from the federal regulations that govern the running of group homes and intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation. The name QMRP has been adopted and used by states and industry. In residential and vocational settings, the

**Discussion 1**

Discuss with students the roles of the residential and vocational staff listed here. Ask them for other vital staff members that are involved. Relate these roles and the paraprofessional's role to the importance of teamwork that was discussed previously.

QMRP is equivalent to the teacher in an educational setting. The QMRP leads a team in assisting individuals in setting goals and developing objectives to meet these goals at work, home, and in the community.

**Job Coach**

A job coach provides support to individuals with disabilities at the work site. The level and degree of support varies depending on the individual and may fade out over time. Paraprofessionals often hold job coach positions.

**Program Director**

A program director may be parallel to the Director of Special Education or principal in an educational setting. The director supervises the QMRP/supervisor, secures new services, hires and fires staff, and is in charge of personnel, policies, and procedures.

**Medical Professionals**

Nurses or nursing consultants (RN or LPN) may be on staff to monitor health concerns and medications. Nurses usually make referrals to doctors. Paraprofessionals must be certified by an approved Department of Health program to pass out medications.

**Social Worker/County Case Manager**

Many individuals with disabilities require the services of a social worker. This person serves as a resource to family and staff. They can help get the services an individual needs to meet his or her goals.

**Administrator/Executive Director**

An administrator in a residential or vocational setting is equivalent to the superintendent in a school setting. She or he sets policy and makes program decisions and is ultimately responsible to the board.

**House/Program Coordinator**

A house/program coordinator may be similar to the Department Head in an educational setting. She or he makes decisions about programming and individual work assignments and coordinates the operation of the program.

# Section 3
# *Where Paraprofessionals Fit into the System*

School districts and vocational or residential settings are (or should be) organized in such a way that everyone's responsibilities are clear, the level of authority of each position is clear, and the path of accountability is clear. The two charts in this section are typical organizational charts of schools and residential or vocational settings. Notice where the paraprofessional fits into each model and from whom the paraprofessional receives direction.

## A Typical School System

Local School Board
↓
Superintendent
↓
Department Heads:
Curriculum & Instruction  Elementary Education
Vocational Education  Special Education
Human Resources/Personnel
↓
Building Principal
↓
Lead Teacher
↓
General, Special, or Vocational Education Teacher
↓
Paraprofessional

## A Typical Residential/Vocational Setting

Administrator, Executive Director, President, etc.
↓
Program Director, Vice President, Program Manager
↓
QMRR, Quality Mental Retardation Professional
↓
House/Program Coordinator, Unit Coordinator
House/Program Supervisor
↓
Paraprofessional/Direct Service Staff

### Discussion 1

Discuss with students the responsibility and authority of each person on both charts. The purpose of the charts is to give paraprofessionals an overall idea of the scope of authority in a school district or a vocational/residential setting, how each is governed, and where the paraprofessional fits into each model. How do the individuals working in the school, residential, or vocational programs (discussed in Section 2) fit into these structures?

### Activity 1

Students will chart the hierarchy in their current or past workplaces. Encourage them to obtain organizational charts from their supervisors and compare them to the ones they make themselves. Have students bring their charts and share their findings during the next class session.

# Section 4
# *Community Agencies That Support Individuals with Disabilities*

**Discussion 1**

Discuss these agencies and organizations and their purposes. Add any others that students feel are important. Explain to students the roles and importance of these types of organizations in supplying support, funds and resources to school, vocational, and residential programs.

**Discussion 2**

Individuals with disabilities may not be eligible for or may not choose to access many of the support services described in this section. Who else can assist and support individuals in home, school, and community settings? Think about who you turn to for help and support in your daily life.

Many agencies, organizations, and services play a vital role in supporting people with disabilities in school and vocational/residential settings. Several are briefly described in this section.

**Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is part of the Department of Economic Security. It is responsible for the delivery of a full range of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible clients. Services include vocational counseling, guidance, vocational evaluation and diagnosis, medical evaluation, vocational training, job placement, and follow up. Clients aren't charged for basic services such as counseling, guidance, and job placement.

**Department of Health**

The Minnesota Department of Health is the state's official health agency. It is responsible for maintaining and improving the health of Minnesota citizens. It surveys settings and enforces health-related regulations, such as regulations related to food preparation in residential/vocational and school settings.

**Department of Education**

The Minnesota Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the state provides a uniform quality education to all students. Under the Department is the State Board of Education, which sets statewide policies and regulations for all public schools. It is made up of a board with nine members whose job it is to implement board policies. The state board meets on a monthly basis for two days. These meeting are open to the public.

**Department of Human Services**

The Minnesota Department of Human Services determines how and when the state will implement federal services. It also determines state regulations for federal services. The Welfare Department and the County Social Service Department are in the Department of Social Services. These agencies are responsible for services to persons with disabilities and have the authority to determine, refer to, and secure services for people with disabilities.

**Community Mental Health Centers**

These centers offer counseling, crisis intervention, and often help determine whether a person will need inpatient or outpatient psychiatric care.

**Parent/Consumer Advocacy Groups**

These groups offer services to individuals with disabilities and their families. They help in securing the best services, placement, and support based on individual needs. They also are active in working to change attitudes about persons with disabilities. Examples of such organizations are PACER, People First, ACT (Advocating Change Together), and Arc.

**Non-Government Organizations**

These are not-for-profit organizations that financially support agencies and groups such as advocacy groups and residential settings. Examples of such organizations are the United Way and the Red Cross.

# *Summary*

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of those with whom you work will help you to establish your role within that organizational structure. Whether you are working in a school, residential, or vocational setting, it is important to find out who the key players are and what your job is in relation to those individuals. If the organizational structure of your workplace is unclear to you, ask your supervisor or a coworker to explain it to you and/or give you an organizational chart to review. Ask where you (the paraprofessional) fits into the structure.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- What is the hierarchical structure at your workplace? Does the written "organizational chart" accurately reflect what is really going on?
- How would you access a community agency representative on behalf of one of your students?
- Does your current workplace collaborate with community-based agencies and organizations? In what ways?

**Activity 1**

Students will collect brochures and pamphlets on area agencies that fit into the categories listed here and support individuals with disabilities and their families in some way. Ask them to call and/or interview agencies to find out what part they play in supporting individuals with disabilities in their community. Students should bring this information to class for the next session to share with others. They should ask for pamphlets or brochures for class members.

**Activity 2 (*Optional*)**

One or more agency representatives will come to class to discuss their agency's role in supporting individuals with disabilities. This activity is strongly recommended as a way of giving students firsthand experience with agency representatives. Including several representatives, a panel discussion may be appropriate.

# 3

## *Chapter Three*

# Teamwork


27 Introduction

27 Section 1: What is Teamwork?

28 Section 2: Who Should Be on the Team?

29 Section 3: Functions of a Team

31 Section 4: Essential Elements of Effective Teams

33 Section 5: What Paraprofessionals Need to Know to be Effective Team Members

34 Section 6: The Individualized Planning Process

37 Summary

37 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

The skills and attitudes that any new employee needs on any job vary greatly, but one set of skills that is important on every job is the ability to work in teams. This is extremely important for paraprofessionals because a paraprofessional will typically work in collaboration with the many professionals who are supporting a student or client. The more effectively the team can work together, the better they can provide programming and services for individuals and their families.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe characteristics of effective teams and team members.
- Understand and describe the roles of team members who most commonly work with individuals with disabilities in a school, residential, or work setting.
- Identify and describe the task, maintenance, and anti-group functions of a team.
- Recognize and understand plans used when developing individualized services for individuals with disabilities.

## Section 1
## *What is Teamwork?*

### The Purpose of a Team

What is the purpose of a team? For our purposes, a team works together to develop a plan that best meets the needs of individuals with disabilities with whom the team is working. The team may work together to develop initial planning with an individual and their family and/or work together to solve problems as they arise.

A team is a group of people who work together to meet goals. This may consist of working on a plan to provide services or working with individuals and their families to set goals and define strategies to meet those goals.

### Characteristics of Effective Teams

In order for a team to be effective, team members must have:

- An understanding of each person's role on the team.
- An understanding of the purpose of the team.
- An ability to talk to each other about issues that affect the efficiency of the team.

**Discussion 1**

What is the purpose of a team? Discuss the characteristics that must be present for effective teamwork.

**Activity 1**

Students will discuss situations in which they were part of a team. Have them identify ways the characteristics listed here were either present or absent from that team, and what impact that had on the team.

**Show Transparency 3.1**

- A willingness to support each other in the team.
- An understanding of how the team works.
- An ability to effectively work through both interpersonal and task-oriented challenges.
- An understanding that more collaboration means less competition to provide the best services for the individual.
- An ability to use conflict positively rather than destructively.
- An ability to work with other groups to assist the individual.
- A sense of interdependence among team members.

## Section 2
## *Who Should Be on the Team?*

**Discussion 1**

Who are the essential team members you're likely to work with in school, residential, or vocational settings? What are their individual roles?

Role definition is essential to any successful team effort. With an integrated team made up of professionals, paraprofessionals, parents, and consumers, it's important to make everyone's role clear. Whether you will be working in a direct service setting or an educational setting, your role on the team needs to be made clear to you. That is the responsibility of your supervisor.

As a guideline to typical roles that team members have, refer to the following overview of team roles adapted from a presentation at the 1987 Arc-Minnesota Conference.

### Roles of Essential Team Members

**Activity 1**

Ask students what other staff members should be added to this team for direct care or in settings with which they are familiar.

**Individual with a Disability**

- Presents personal values and priorities.
- Advocates for personal accommodations and modifications.
- Provides insight into personal goals and future planning.

**Activity 2**

Ask students to prepare a chart of the team members and their roles on the team in a site familiar to them for next session.

**Parent/Family Member**

- Presents family values and priorities for the individual.
- Provides insight into the individual's interests, preferences, skills, and needed supports.
- Provides a vision of the individual's future.

**Show Transparency 3.2**

**General Education Teacher**

- Sees and includes the individual as a member of the class rather than as a visitor.
- Seeks and uses others to adapt learning activities to include the individual in meaningful ways.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Special Education Teacher**

- Provides consultation and collaboration.
- Adapts curriculum, materials, and equipment.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Paraprofessional**

- Facilitates the individual's direct participation with peers/adults.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Therapist (Physical, Occupational, Speech & Language)**

- Insures functional approaches to addressing therapy needs in typical activities and interactions such as self care, getting on the bus, finding the bathroom.
- Adapts the curriculum, materials, and equipment.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Administrator**

- Draws together general and special education resources.
- Insures staff training and team consultative support.
- Assists in problem solving logistics and program issues.

*Roles of Essential Team Members* adapted with permission from Kjerland, L., Neiss, J., Franke, B., Verdon, C. & Westman, E. (1987). *Roles of essential team members.* Paper presented at the ARC Minnesota Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

# Section 3
# *Functions of a Team*

A team has three functions – task functions, maintenance functions, and anti-group functions – which are described below.

## Task Functions

Task functions are the specific activities a team comes together to accomplish. For example, a student's team may meet to develop a plan for the year and document that plan on an IEP. Skills needed to successfully accomplish these tasks include:

- **Initiating:** Discussing what could be done or how challenges experienced by the client/student could be approached. This is when ideas are collected, suggestions are made, and procedures are reviewed for possible solutions.
- **Regulating:** Regulating the direction by summarizing what's been done, by stating time limitations, or by restating the goals.

**Discussion 1**

Discuss each of these task functions. Have students give examples of each. Relate team discussions to both education and direct care situations. Make sure students understand these are important functions for all members of the team to recognize.

**Activity 1**

Students will come up with examples of teams with which they've been involved or familiar and that worked well together.

- **Information Seeking:** Seeking clarification on suggestions.
- **Information Giving:** Offering facts or generalizations related to experiences pertinent to the situation being discussed.
- **Opinion Giving:** Stating beliefs or opinions about the decision the group should choose.
- **Elaborating:** Giving examples or developing further understanding by offering rationale for suggestions made.
- **Coordinating:** Clarifying suggestions made for the student/client and trying to decide on which are the most appropriate.
- **Orienting:** Summarizing what has happened, pointing out problems, and raising questions about whether more information from the outside is needed or if decisions can be made.
- **Evaluating:** Helping the group to evaluate decisions, goals, and procedures, and checking to see if the group is in agreement or deciding what further steps need to be taken before a consensus can be reached.

**Activity 2**

Students will share specific examples of the maintenance functions paraprofessionals have used in team situations. Tell students that these behaviors are also important when working one-to-one with students/clients. Brainstorm with students how they can encourage others they work with to use these behaviors more frequently.

## Maintenance Functions

These functions focus on the personal relationships among members in the group. These functions help a group maintain itself so the focus of the team can be on the tasks and the service to the client/student, rather than on any interpersonal conflicts within the group. These ideas can be used by the team leader or any team member to work toward building the relationships on the team. This sort of supportive action leads to groups who work much more collaboratively together.

- **Supporting:** Creating an emotional climate that holds the group together and helps each member to want to contribute. Ways this is done include: agreeing with others' suggestions, offering positive feedback for another's suggestions, or adding your own additional thoughts or ideas to someone else's suggestions.
- **Harmonizing:** Mediating differences between team members or relieving tension with a joke/story about a similar situation.
- **Gatekeeping:** Noticing certain team members who have not spoken and asking them their opinions or asking them to relate something that fits into the conversation. This helps members who may feel isolated to come back into the conversation.
- **Encouraging:** Praising and accepting others' ideas. This creates a warmth and a friendly feeling of belonging and helps others become more responsive.
- **Compromising:** Admitting when you're wrong, or modifying your ideas when you hear other input that makes you realize collaborating creates a stronger decision or choice.

### Anti-Group Functions

These functions focus on members' individual needs and behaviors but don't help the team work as a unit. In these functions, the group goals are forgotten and the individual acts primarily to satisfy personal needs. These are behaviors that, while unavoidable at times, a group works to prevent by implementing the maintenance functions described previously.

- **Blocking:** Being negative and unreasonably resistant; trying to bring back issues the group has already rejected.
- **Self-Confessing:** Using the group to express personal problems and gain sympathy.
- **Recognition-Seeking:** Calling attention to oneself and describing personal achievements and boasting.
- **Dominating:** Attempting to take over by interrupting others, flattering, asserting superior status, asserting authority, or manipulating the group or individuals in the group.
- **Being Cynical:** Bringing up unrelated subjects, being cynical about what team meetings like this accomplish or displaying lack of involvement.
- **Special Interest Pleading:** Stereotyping what is best for others or the group when one is really hiding one's own biases or prejudices in the stereotype used.
- **Aggressing:** Questioning the competence of the people giving their opinions, joking aggressively, showing envy by trying to take credit for another's ideas, expressing disapproval of values, acting on feelings of others.

*Task Functions, Maintenance Functions,* and *Anti-Group Functions* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

### Activity 3

Students will give reasons they feel team members or coworkers engage in anti-group behavior. Ask for examples. Brainstorm ways to work with people with these types of behaviors. Ask student to relate times they have acted in any of the "anti-group" ways and why.

### Activity 4

Divide the class into groups of eight to ten students standing in a circle. Direct each person to reach across the circle and hold the hand of the person across from them. Then, with the other hand, reach across the circle and hold the hand of *another* person. Make sure everyone is holding the hand of two different people, so the group is tied in a knot. Tell the group that the object is to untangle themselves without letting go. How did they go about untangling the knots? What happened to the group as you began to untangle the knot? How did the group work together to untangle itself? What strategies did the group use to plan its untangling? What did you learn about solving complex problems in a group?

# Section 4
# *Essential Elements of Effective Teams*

For a team to function effectively and individuals to fulfill their roles, the following characteristics should be cultivated in a team:

### Positive Interdependence

Positive interdependence means that each group member sees himself or herself as linked with each other member in a way that one member cannot succeed unless other members succeed. It also means that the work of each member of the team helps you in

**Discussion 1**

Introduce these elements of effective teams and discuss them with the class. Discuss independence and interdependence and explain how important interdependence is in team efforts and how important accountability is in their job. Because they have to be so flexible and respond to many supervisors, it's extremely important for them to devise a way to keep track of who said what about whom. Lead a discussion of methods to keep one accountable. (i.e., a weekly plan with each supervisor to be evaluated at the end of the week; a calendar for the month with assignments agreed upon, etc.). Explain the complex nature of collaboration and how difficult it can be without good communication. Stress the importance of setting up a good communications network with all members or the team and all supervisors. Encourage the students to request time from their supervisors to regularly evaluate team efforts always asking, "Is what we are doing working for the client/student? Are we all working together? Are we bringing in the paraprofessionals as an essential member of the team?"

your efforts and that, together, you improve the services you provide to individuals.

**Individual Accountability**

This means that you and every other member of the team has a responsibility to the group to follow through on assigned tasks with individuals. The team depends on you to follow through. It also means that every member of the team has the responsibility to give extra assistance to each other and offer encouragement to each other when asked for or needed. When everyone on the team is individually accountable in these ways, it is a "safe" environment for everyone and the goal of working for the client's or student's best interests is clear.

**Face-to-Face Interaction**

Face-to-face interaction means the amount of actual participation you have in the team. The smaller the team, the more chance you have to be actively involved. The larger the team, the less direct interaction and involvement you have. Smaller teams are better. The smaller the team, the more you will feel directly linked to the other members, and the easier it will be for you to work directly on the needs of clients/students.

**Collaborative Skills**

Collaborative skills includes cooperation, sharing, and working together for a common cause. It means that personal issues or personalities don't take precedence over the "product" of service delivery. It means that people are put together on a team because of their role or position and then are given equal opportunity to make a contribution. Each team member must feel they have something to share and contribute in providing for the well being of the student/client and they must be allowed to share that information.

**Group Processing**

This means the team needs to set aside time to talk with each other about how well they are working together on:

- The client's/student's goals.
- Their working relationship with each other as team members.

The team needs to develop a good balance between outcome goals (those for the client/student) and process goals (developing an effective team). If the team has some real difficulties with roles (whose job is this?) or positive supportive behaviors toward each other, they may need to call someone from the outside in to help set up some stable boundaries.

*Essential Elements of Effective Teams* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 5
# *What Paraprofessionals Need to Know to be Effective Team Members*

As a paraprofessional, you're an essential part of every team working with individuals with disabilities in school or vocational/residential settings. For you to fully participate on the team, you will need to know the following:

**Job Role**

As a paraprofessional, you're a vital member of the team. Learn what your role is and how that role functions within the team. At this point in this training you have done exercises to help you learn what your role is or should be in a given setting.

**Responsibilities**

Learn as much as possible about your responsibilities. In learning what your role is and what a paraprofessional job description is (or should be) in your chosen setting, you should have a general sense at this point of the job responsibilities.

**Goals**

Become familiar with the goals on which all members of the team are working. Those goals may be designed for one individual. The goals may be basic philosophical goals of the organization or school. You may be on several teams with different goals. It may seem, at times, like a juggling act to keep the goals separate for each team, but it's important to keep the goals clear.

**Time**

Participate on teams to whatever extent possible in your situation and work closely with staff. This is essential in paraprofessional job roles and responsibilities. To be an effective member of a team, work with staff to schedule meetings when you can attend and build in the time to prepare for conferences and staffings.

**Communication**

Communicating well with others is a critical skill. In order to get your views across to others and make your points clear, you need to have good, clear communication skills, as presented in the next section of this training.

**Discussion 1**

Discuss job roles, responsibilities, goals, time, communication, and the importance of each in the role of the paraprofessional in a team work situation. There might be a lot of discussion about how the paraprofessional doesn't feel a part of a team and isn't allowed to participate as an active team member.

**Show Transparency 3.3**

**Discussion 2**

Brainstorm with the group some positive steps they can take to become more equal members of teams. Brainstorm ideas of how a paraprofessional can be a member of a team meeting when the meetings are held at times they cannot attend (i.e., during bus duty, after or before hours). One solution could be for the paraprofessional to develop a written form with his or her supervisor to use to relay information about the individual being discussed that clearly addresses the paraprofessional's concerns and experiences.

# Section 6
# *The Individualized Planning Process*

**Discussion 1**

How are teams involved in individualized planning for students with disabilities? What plans are used to facilitate the individualized planning process?

**Show Transparency 3.4**

## The Paraprofessional's Role in the Planning Process

A perfect example of teamwork is the development of an individual plan. There are many types of individual plans developed to meet the goals of individuals with disabilities, including the Individualized Education Plan, Individualized Family Service Plan, Individual Service Plan, Individual Community Support Plan, and the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program.

In each of these individual plans, it is essential that the paraprofessional be involved in the process because often it is the paraprofessional who is working most directly with the individual with the disability. For example, if the paraprofessional serves as the bus aide, he or she may also be the one staff member who has regular contact with parents. Therefore, often, the paraprofessional intimately knows the individual, the family, and their needs.

However, often in reality the paraprofessional may not be involved in the individual plan meetings. The meetings are either scheduled at times when a paraprofessional isn't on site (i.e., bus duty), or the paraprofessional isn't asked to attend. It is very important, as part of your team development skills, for you as a paraprofessional to emphasize the necessity of your attendance at these meetings. You're a crucial link. At the very least, you need to be given the opportunity to write a detailed report of your work with the students and recommendations. Because paraprofessionals are being given more and more responsibility, it's essential that you be involved in planning as vital team members.

## Types of Individual Plans

### The Individualized Educational Plan

The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is a written plan authorized and developed under Public Law 94-142 which, revised, is now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476) or IDEA. The IEP is a written plan for any student with a disability who qualifies for and receives special education services in the public school system. Four important requirements of IDEA concern:

- Notification.
- Participation in meetings.
- Content of the IEP.
- Agency responsibility.

The IEP describes a student's needs, outlines the instructional program, and defines types of services necessary to meet the student's needs. In order to develop this plan, a multidisciplinary team meets to determine the needs of the student. This team should include the student, the parent(s), the school psychologist, a general education teacher, the special education teacher, the paraprofessional, any community agency representatives involved with the student, and anyone else involved in planning for the unique needs of the students.

The team meets to determine the student's:

- Accomplishments.
- Educational goals.
- Supports needed for learning.
- Plans for the future.
- Related service needs.

Based on these discussions, a plan is written which the student and parents agree to and sign. (See Appendix A for a sample IEP form.)

**The Individualized Family Service Plan**

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed for young children with disabilities and their families. The impetus for the development of this plan came out of federal legislation that extended educational provisions under the age of five (Public Law 99-457). The purpose of the IFSP is to identify and facilitate the use of formal and informal resources that reflect the families' priorities for them and their children. The written IFSP must include:

- Information on the child's present level of functioning.
- The strengths and needs of the child's family.
- Major goals for the child and family with criteria, procedures, and timeline.
- Specific services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family.
- Dates for initiation and duration of services.
- Assignment of a case manager most immediately relevant to the child's needs.
- Steps to support the transition to preschool services.

**The Individual Service Plan**

Another plan is called the Individual Service Plan (ISP). This is a plan for persons with mental retardation or related conditions who apply for county social services. The ISP is developed by the case manager with the individual, the individual's legal representative, and their advocate, if any. The ISP must include:

**Discussion 2**

Refer students to the sample IEP from the Minnesota Department of Special Education in Appendix A. Walk through the IEP, explaining how it is filled out and by whom. Depending on the group, you may want to assign roles (paraprofessional, parent, psychologist, student, etc.), role play the IEP process, and fill out the IEP form. Emphasize that the IEP process is an example of team participation. Ask the students, "What are the pitfalls of this team process?" Discuss the issues related to paraprofessionals being involved in the meetings. Allow students to air their feelings. Ask for some possible solutions. Relate the team process as it relates to the individual plans described in this chapter.

- Results of the diagnosis.
- Summary of assessment information and recommendations.
- A written summary of those needs identified in the diagnosis and assessment.
- Identification of all service needs, including the type, amount, and frequency of the services needed and services to be provided by the case manager.
- Actions that will be taken to develop or obtain the services identified, including those services not currently available.
- Long-range goals and anticipated dates for attainment of goals.
- Annual goals related to the attainment of the long-range goals.
- Information providers must submit to the case manager and the frequency with which the information must be provided.
- Signatures of the person and legal representative to document that the ISP has been reviewed and that the person agrees to the goals and service specified.

**The Individual Community Support Plan**

Yet another type of individual plan is called the Individual Community Support Plan (ICSP). This plan is written by a county case manager with a person who has serious and persistent mental illness. The ICSP must include:

- Goals for the person.
- Services needed by the individual.
- Goals for each service.
- Amount, scope, frequency, and duration of each service
- Frequency of face-to-face contact between the person and case manager needed to implement the ICSP.
- Services involving the individual's family or primary caregiver or other interested persons.
- Steps the people and case manager will take to assure the individual's access to services identified in the plan.

**Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program**

The last individual plan to be cited here as an example of individual plans for persons with disabilities is the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP). Once a person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the counselor assists the individual in identifying vocational goals. Those goals are developed in the IWRP. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work on this plan with the individual and the case manager and any other agency people. The objectives and services in the plan are designed to overcome barriers which were identified in the diagnostic study as those that are keeping the person from employment.

# *Summary*

When team members are clear about their roles and the team function, cultivate the traits of an effective team, and value the participation of paraprofessional, the following can happen:

- Goals are realistic and possible because everyone contributes in developing them.
- The team members are committed and support each other.
- Priorities are understood and agreed upon.
- Ideas and communication are encouraged.
- Problem solving is done effectively.
- Feedback is honest and "on target".
- Conflict is okay, and is even seen as a normal way to discuss and solve problems.
- Team members get support from each other to be productive team members and productive in their personal goals.
- Team members encourage each other to try new ideas with clients/students and they support each other for those efforts.
- Team members understand the importance of *each* member on the team.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- How could the team you work on become more effective?
- How could you get more involved with the teams for the individual students with whom you work?
- What strategies could be used when team members can't seem to agree on a solution to a particular problem.

# 4

## *Chapter Four*

# Legal Responsibilities


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# *Introduction*

There are many laws, rules, and regulations that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. As a paraprofessional, it is your responsibility to be familiar with these laws, as well as the policies your employer has developed to ensure the laws are followed at your workplace. Paraprofessionals who work directly with individuals with disabilities should be informed of and trained to follow the policies and procedures needed for their specific jobs. If you're unsure of these policies, ask your supervisor to provide you with a copy of the policies and procedures you're expected to follow.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand the laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- Understand and describe what information must be kept confidential when working with individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Understand and describe your responsibility regarding the abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

## Section 1
## *Laws that Protect the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities*

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973** guarantees that individuals with disabilities have access to buildings on which federal dollars have been spent and it protects the rights of individuals not to be discriminated against in jobs where federal dollars are being used. This legislation has been instrumental in increasing the accessibility of parks, monuments, museums, schools, universities, and other public buildings for individuals with disabilities.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) requires public schools to provide a free, appropriate education to all children, regardless of disability. This law mandates that each person being educated has an individual education plan designed to meet his or her specific needs. IDEA also mandates that families be part of the planning team for their child. A mechanism called "due process" was created so that parents who disagree with the plan have a way to formally object and to work, through channels, to resolve disagreements. (IDEA was formerly the Education for All Handicapped Act, PL 94-142).

**Discussion 1**

Why are laws such as IDEA and the ADA so important for individuals with disabilities? How have these laws changed the way services are delivered in schools and in residential and vocational settings?

**The Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA) of 1990 speaks especially to the workplace and the rights of individuals with disabilities to access business, industry, transportation, communications systems, and educational settings generally used by the public. It addresses accommodation — the alteration of job settings so that work can be done by people with disabilities.

## Section 2
## *Confidentiality*

**Discussion 1**

Why is it important to keep information regarding the individuals and families with whom you work confidential? What is the role of the paraprofessional in keeping such information confidential?

**Activity 1**

Students will write a description of their organization's/school district's policy on how to handle confidential information. Students who are not currently in a paraprofessional position should contact a school or agency and ask about their policy. This should be turned in and discussed in the next class session.

Confidentiality is one of the most critical and important aspects of your job as a paraprofessional. It's your legal responsibility to observe both the rights of individuals with disabilities and of parents in regard to data privacy. Follow these guidelines where issues of confidentiality are concerned:

- Never refer to other students or clients by name in another staffing or conference or with other parents.
- Don't share specific information about an individual's program or unique needs in the lounge or out in the community.
- Take questions you have about the organization's policies on confidentiality to the building supervisor or principal.
- Access individual records for the sole purpose of being more effective in your work with the individual.
- Go through the proper channels to access confidential information. Make sure you're authorized to do so.
- If you question policies and procedures used with an individual, discuss this privately with your supervisor. There is often confidential information that directs specific programming of which you may not be aware.
- Speak and write responsibly when passing on information. Be aware of who might hear you or read what you have written.

### Maintaining Confidentiality When Working with Students and Their Families

1 Why must confidentiality be maintained?

- *Federal laws, state regulations, and local policies require it.*

2 Who may have access to written or oral information about students or their families?

- *Only personnel responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services; and/or personnel with responsibility for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of a child or youth.*

3 Who should not have access to information about the performance level, behavior, program goals and objectives, or progress of a child or youth?

- *Personnel and others who are not responsible for planning or providing services to students or their families.*

4 What types of information do students and their families have the right to expect will be kept confidential?

- *The results of formal and informal assessments*
- *Social and behavioral actions*
- *Performance levels and progress*
- *Program goals and objectives*
- *Information about family relationships and other personal matters*

## Laws that Relate to Confidentiality

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act protects individuals by prohibiting the sharing of information about them without their permission.

### Chapter 20 U.S. Code, § 1232g and Chapter 34 Code of Federal Regulation, Part 99

Federal law requires any educational agency or institution receiving federal funding (most schools, vocational schools, community colleges, and universities) to grant parents of students the "right to inspect and review the education records of the student." The parent's right to review records only remains, however, until it is transferred to the student when that student either turns eighteen years old or enrolls in a post-secondary educational institution. Each educational agency or institution must develop procedures to allow students to review their records. However, if the records in a student's file contain names and information relating to other students, the parent has only the right to see those records which relate to "such student or to be informed of the specific information contained in such part of such material."

Under federal law, each educational agency or institution must also provide parents an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of a student's records to ensure the content of the records is accurate, not misleading, or otherwise violative of the privacy or rights of students. Parents are granted an opportunity to make corrections, deletions, or to insert a written explanation.

The following records are not required to be given out even upon request of parents or students in a post-secondary setting:

- Instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and educational personnel records that are completed by a particular individual and only that individual or a substitute have access to such records.
- Certain law enforcement unit records.

- Certain employee records maintained by the educational agency or institution.
- Records maintained on students in post-secondary educational settings by physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other recognized professionals in the course of treatment except upon the student's authorization for release of information to another physician or recognized professional.

However, even if the parent or student doesn't consent, certain records may have to be released pursuant to judicial orders and subpoenas, audits, and evaluations of federally supported programs, and certain record-keeping procedures.

# Section 3
# *Abuse & Neglect*

**Discussion 1**

Go over the physical and behavioral signs of abuse or neglect. Discuss the difficulty in identifying abuse or neglect in situations involving persons with disabilities. For example, an individual who experiences behavior challenges may display many of the characteristics as part of the disability, or an individual with a physical disability may fall often and have many bruises and scrapes. These are just examples to illustrate the complications of identifying abuse and neglect in individuals with disabilities.

Discuss the emotional dilemma and value issues involved in reporting suspected abuse or neglect. Acknowledge how uncomfortable it can be to be caught in the middle among parents, families, and reporting agencies.

You're required by law to report any suspected incidents of abuse or neglect because paraprofessionals are in positions that provide services to children and adults. This includes abuse suspected internally (within your setting) or externally (outside of your setting). All states impose a civil or criminal penalty on those who don't report incidents. Make sure you're aware of your school or organization's procedure. In most cases, paraprofessionals would report any suspicions to an immediate supervisor. Your identity is protected by law when you report any suspected cases. Knowing this, you must then know what signs to look for that indicate abuse or neglect. There can be many and they can be particularly hard to detect with individuals with disabilities because of the complexity of problems. However, here are a few signs to look for:

## Signs of Abuse

### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Malnutrition
- Constant fatigue or listlessness
- Poor hygiene
- Inadequate clothing for weather conditions
- Appearance of overall poor care
- Injuries treated inappropriately or inadequately
- Improper supervision for needs
- Poor work/school attendance
- Drug or alcohol use

- Excessive child care or other responsibilities which are expected in order to have basic needs met

**Signs of Emotional Abuse**

- Very low or high body weight
- Lack of concern for physical appearance
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking)
- Sleep disorders
- Poor self-concept
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hostility
- Unresponsive to praise
- Antisocial behaviors

**Signs of Sexual Abuse**

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Bruises, abrasions, or bleeding in the genital or perineal area
- Swelling of genitalia
- Complaints of genital pain
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Behavioral signs depend on the age and maturity of the individual, the nature and duration of the abuse, and the individual's relationship to the abuser. They may include the following:
  - Becoming withdrawn
  - Daydreaming excessively
  - Exhibiting poor self-esteem
  - Seeming frightened or phobic
  - Expressing feelings of guilt or shame
  - Declining performance in school or on the job
  - Acting suddenly younger and more immature

## Laws Related to Abuse & Neglect

It's important to understand some basic laws that apply to your work with individuals who may be subject to abuse and/or neglect. This is just a brief description of some basic information about key laws you should know.

- **The Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Act (MN Statutes, § 626.557):** This is a law passed in Minnesota that requires all people in licensed occupations and others to report abuse and neglect of a group of citizens known as *vulnerable*

**Activity 1**

Students will learn their organization/school district's procedure regarding abuse and neglect. Students who are not currently in paraprofessional positions should contact a school or agency and ask them about their policy. This should be turned in and discussed in the next class session.

*adults.* These people include individuals with mental and physical disabilities, the elderly, or other adults who can't protect themselves. The reporting of abuse or neglect of these individuals should be made directly to your supervisor if you suspect any condition that isn't healthy or safe for individuals. If you suspect your supervisor or institution of abuse or neglect, you should report incidents to legal authorities.

- **The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, § 626.556):** Neglect of children is defined in two places in Minnesota state law. Anyone can report abuse or neglect. However, under legal mandate, professionals and paraprofessionals are required to report any suspected incident of child abuse by anyone working in healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, law enforcement, or the clergy. A list of mandated reporters would be physicians, dentists, educators, day care staff, group home staff, therapists, clergy, foster parents, pharmacists, social workers, guardians *ad litem,* and nurses. Paraprofessionals fall into this category and are mandated by state law to report any suspected cases of child abuse. Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability. The reporter's name is confidential, accessible only upon consent of the reporter or by court order.

**Activity 2**

After discussing the signs of abuse, go through Reading 1: *What Can I Do to Prevent Harm to Children?,* which gives characteristics of parents of an abused or neglected child. Because paraprofessionals often have closer contact with families than others, they may be able to recognize situations that seem unhealthy or suspicious. Discuss this with the students. Explain how important it is for paraprofessionals to be knowledgeable about these characteristics in case they find themselves in situations that should be reported.

## Reading 1: What Can I Do to Prevent Harm to Children?

The parents of an abused or neglected child may exhibit some of the following behaviors or characteristics:

- Isolation from family supports such as friends, relatives, neighbors, and community groups. They consistently fail to keep appointments, discourage social contacts, or don't participate in school activities or events.
- Lack of trust.
- Were themselves abused or neglected as children.
- Reluctance to give information about the child's injuries or condition. When questioned, they are unable to explain the injuries, or they offer farfetched or contradictory explanations.
- Inappropriate responses to the seriousness of the child's condition. They either overreact, seeming hostile or antagonistic when questioned even casually, or they underreact, showing little concern or awareness and seeming more preoccupied with their own problems than with the child's.
- Refusal to consent to diagnostic studies.
- Failure to seek timely or appropriate medical care for the child for routine checkups, optometry, dental care, or for treatment

of an injury or illness. In taking an injured child for medical care, they may choose a different hospital or doctor each time.

- Too critical of the child and seldom, if ever, discuss the child in positive terms.
- Unrealistic expectations of the child, expecting or demanding behavior that is beyond the child's years or ability.
- Belief in the necessity of harsh punishment for children.
- Seldom touch or look at the child; may ignore the child's crying or react with impatience.
- Confinement of the child, perhaps in a crib or playpen, for long periods of time.
- Lack understanding of the child's physical, emotional, and psychological needs.
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Lack control or have a fear of losing control.

The material in *Abuse & Neglect* adapted with permission from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota; the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center, State Planning Agency, 658 Cedar, St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Learner Support Systems, 550 Cedar, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Reading 2: Vulnerability

Vulnerable adults are persons aged eighteen or older who:

- Live in licensed facilities such as nursing homes, hospitals, and treatment centers for chemical dependency, mental retardation, mental illness, or physical disabilities, *or*
- Receive services from licensed facilities such as developmental achievement centers or home health agencies, *or*
- Are in family settings and would not by themselves report abuse or neglect because of impaired physical or mental function, or because of emotional status.

Some types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse:** Conduct that produces pain or injury and isn't accidental.
- **Verbal abuse:** Repeated conduct that produces mental or emotional stress.
- **Sexual abuse:** Violation of criminal sexual conduct or prostitution statutes.
- **Exploitation:** Illegal use of vulnerable adult's person or property through undue influence, duress, deception, or fraud.

### Activity 3

Referring to *Reading 2: Vulnerability*, discuss the types of individuals this law covers and discuss the implications of this law for many of the individuals that students will work with in terms of their rights to protection.



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Some examples of neglect include:

- **Caretaker neglect:** Failure of caretaker to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.
- **Self-neglect:** Absence of necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.
- **Exploitation through neglect:** Absence of necessary financial management that might lead to exploitation.

**How to Report Your Concerns**

Call your local county social services agency or law enforcement office (city or county) and report the following:

- What happened.
- To whom it happened.
- When it happened.
- Where it happened.
- Who perpetrated the abuse.
- Who was responsible for the neglect.

After you report, a process of investigation and protection will begin right away for the vulnerable adult. You need fear no reprisal or civil action if you make your report in good faith.

For more information about the law or about reporting abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, please call your local county social services agency or law enforcement authorities.

# *Summary*

As a paraprofessional working with individuals with disabilities and their families, it is your responsibility to follow the policies and procedures designed to ensure their rights and protections under the law. This is particularly important when dealing with confidential information such as the details of a student's personal and/or family life. You must know what information can and cannot be shared and with whom. It is important to note that all information regarding the abuse or neglect (or suspicion of abuse or neglect) must be reported immediately to the proper authority. Be sure that you're clear about your school or organization's policies regarding these issues.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- You suspect that one of your students is being abused at home. What do you do?
- You suspect someone in your school/organization is being abusive to some of the students/consumers. What do you do?
- You ask your supervisor for a copy of the school/organization policies regarding confidentiality and abuse/neglect. He or she says there's no written policy. What do you do?

# 5

## *Chapter Five*

# Communication


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55 Section 4: Good Communication with Supervisors

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63 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

Clear communication with the staff with whom you work is essential in a workable relationship between a paraprofessional and other staff members. When in doubt, communicate. Communication is most effective when people:

- Communicate clearly.
- Communicate often.
- Communicate with *all* parties involved.
- Really listen to each other.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and identify personal communication strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand and describe barriers to communication and strategies to overcome them.
- Understand and describe roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working in a school or residential/vocational setting.
- Utilize a problem-solving technique to work collaboratively to solve a specific work-related problem.

## Section 1
## *Basic Communication Strategies*

**Discussion 1**

What elements contribute to effective communication? What strategies can paraprofessionals and their supervisors use to enhance their communication?

**Show Transparency 5.1**

**Show Transparency 5.2**

Here are some strategies to remember when trying to pay attention to positive communication:

- Active listeners make good communicators. Active listeners have positive attitudes and open minds. They show interest in what the other person is saying by nonverbal cues, good eye contact, and remembering what was said.
- The attitudes and feelings of both the supervisor and paraprofessional must be known, respected, and understood. If they aren't shared, the relationship won't be open or growing. Those attitudes cover such arenas as individual roles and duties, persons with disabilities, instructional styles, management styles, and the contributions of others (and each other).
- An understanding of similarities and differences between supervisor and paraprofessional must be recognized and understood. Those may relate to different values, cultural and religious heritage, levels of education, or levels of experience.

**Activity 1**

Have students draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. On the left write "my strengths" and on the right "my weaknesses." Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses on the job, including your communication skills as you see them. Share this list with someone at work or a family member or friend. This assignment will be turned in and discussed in the next session.

- The paraprofessional and immediate supervisor should develop and share a common vocabulary and a system of nonverbal cues. Verbal and nonverbal cues play an important part in communication. Gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact are examples of nonverbal communication. Facial expressions give feedback about whether or not information has been understood and is being received, and the listener's attitude about the information. Posture and body movements also communicate attitude. Eye contact and facial expressions can give a sense of a positive – or negative – relationship between people.
- The supervisor must make sure directions and expectations are clearly understood and that the paraprofessional is able to perform the assigned tasks prior to implementing them.
- The paraprofessional must be willing and assertive enough to ask for clarification or assistance if the assignment isn't understood. The paraprofessional needs to explain in an assertive (not aggressive) manner what he or she needs from the supervisor to be successful.
- The supervisor should discuss with the paraprofessional and then decide together what special interests, talents, and training the paraprofessional has that will complement and enhance the delivery of services.
- The paraprofessional and his or her immediate supervisor must work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.
- Silence is a form of communication. It's a difficult form of communication to understand because it can mean anger, or grief or depression. It can also mean that the listener understands what is being said. It is important to be assertive in your response when listening so the person who is trying to communicate with you knows your level of understanding and that there is agreement. When you remain silent, you block that ability to have cooperative communication.

## Guidelines for Team Consensus

Teams are marked by mutual ownership. Using consensus during problem-solving discussions is critical for each person so all can claim ownership for the outcomes and solutions. Important guidelines for using a consensus approach are:

- Listening and paying attention to each other.
- Asking open-ended questions using "what" and "how."
- Not agreeing too quickly with each other.

- Generating multiple options – challenge the limits!
- Treating options as alternatives not answers.
- Not arguing blindly for *your* views.
- Treating your differences as strengths.

You will know you have reached consensus when:

- Both of you agree on a single alternative.
- Each of you can honestly say:
  - "I believe you understand my point of view."
  - "I believe I understand your point of view."
  - "Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was arrived at fairly and openly and it's the best solution for *us* at this time."

## Twelve Barriers to Communication

**Discussion 2**

Students will read *Twelve Barriers to Communication* and discuss these barriers in work, social, and personal settings.

**Show Transparency 5.3**

### 1 Judgment

- **Criticizing:** A judgmental roadblock is criticism. Parents think they need to judge their children or they will never become hard-working, mannerly adults. Teachers and paraprofessionals frequently think they must criticize their students or they will never learn.
- **Name Calling:** "Putting down" or stereotyping the other person. "What a dope!" "Just like a woman." "Egghead." "You hardhats are all alike." "You're just another insensitive male."
- **Diagnosing:** Analyzing why a person is behaving as he or she is; playing amateur psychiatrist. "I can read you like a book." "You're just doing that to irritate me." "Just because you went to college, you think you're better than I am."
- **Praising Evaluatively:** Making a positive judgment of the other person and his or her action or attitudes. "You are always such a good child – I know you'll help me with the lawn tonight."

### 2 Sending Solutions

- **Ordering:** Commanding the other person to do what you want to have done. "Do your homework right now." "Why? Because I said so…"
- **Threatening:** Trying to control the other's actions by warning of negative consequences that you will instigate. "You'll do it or else…" "Stop that noise right now or I'll keep the whole class after school."
- **Moralizing:** Telling another person what she should do. "You shouldn't get a divorce – think of what will happen to the children." "You ought to tell him you're sorry."

- **Excessive/Inappropriate Questions:** Closed-ended questions are often barriers in a relationship; these are the type of questions that can usually be answered in a few words – often with a yes or no. "When did it happen?" "Are you sorry you did it?"

**3 Avoiding the Other's Concerns**

- **Advising:** Giving the other person a solution to her problems. "If I were you, I'd sure tell him off." "That's an easy one to solve. First…"
- **Diverting:** Pushing the other's problems aside through distraction. "Don't dwell on it Sarah. Let's talk about something more pleasant." "Think *you've* got it bad? Let me tell you what happened to *me*."
- **Logical Argument:** Attempting to convince the other with an appeal to facts or logic, usually without consideration of the emotional factors involved. "Look at the facts; if you hadn't bought that new car, we could have made the down payment on the house."
- **Reassuring:** Trying to stop the other person from feeling the negative emotions he or she is experiencing. "Don't worry, it's always darkest before the dawn." "It'll work out in the end."

*Twelve Barriers to Communication* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 2
# *Communication Styles*

## Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is the most desirable and productive behavior in accomplishing your job. Assertive communication doesn't always feel "comfortable." The first step in being assertive is understanding what "assertive" means. Assertive communication comes when you:

- Know what you need.
- Express yourself clearly.
- Choose the best time to discuss issues.
- Check for clarification.
- Act in an empowered manner.
- Act responsibly and follow through.
- Act in a direct manner.
- Express yourself honestly and respectfully.

## Passive Communication

Passive or nonassertive communication occurs when you remain silent when you ought to ask for help or explain your needs. Passive behavior communicates a sense of inferiority. The passive person acts as if others' rights and needs are more important than his or her own.

With this communication style, others don't know when you need help because you try to act as if there's no problem. This behavior doesn't serve you well on the job, or with the individuals for whom you're working. The paraprofessional needs to feel comfortable, and know that he or she has the right to ask for assistance when needed.

## Aggressive Communication

Aggressive communication is very demanding and is often disrespectful to those at whom it's directed. Aggressive communication frequently gives the impression that "my needs, wants, and rights come first." When someone is acting in an aggressive manner, he or she doesn't ask for assistance, but demands it. This communication style is usually met by strong disapproval.

## A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior

| | Passive | Assertive | Aggressive |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Characteristics of behavior** | Emotionally dishonest, denies own rights to minimize conflict. | (Appropriately) emotionally honest, self-enhancing, direct, expressive. | (Inappropriately) emotionally honest, self-enhancing, direct. |
| **Your feelings when you engage in this behavior** | Angry, hurt, pushed around. | Confident. | Self-righteous, superior, possibly guilty then & later. |
| **Other people's feelings about themselves when you engage in this behavior** | Superior, burdened by the responsibility | Valued or respected. | Hurt, humiliated. |
| **Other people's feelings about you when you engage in this behavior** | Pity, irritation. | Generally respected. | Angry, vengeful. |

*A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

### Activity 1

Ask for volunteers to do the following role play, one taking an aggressive approach, one a passive approach, and one an assertive approach. The fourth will act as the supervisor who will react to these situations. After the role plays, discuss which method of addressing the supervisor was the most effective. Encourage students to be assertive when resolving issues.

**Situation:** The school paraprofessional has just completed the first week on the job and is beginning to feel comfortable with the role, but on Friday is told that starting Monday he or she is to ride the bus with a very unruly bunch of students to maintain control. The paraprofessional feels totally unequipped to handle this role and doesn't know how to prepare. He or she goes to the supervisor to discuss the upcoming assignment. Have each student act out this situation with the supervisor. The passive person will say little and have a hard time expressing fears and concerns. The aggressive person will make demands. The assertive one will clearly state concerns, ask for proper support, and negotiate with the supervisor.

**Activity 2**

Students will read and discuss the two charts *A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior*, and *Body Language and Voice*. Since manipulative behavior has not been discussed separately, ask students which category they feel manipulative behaviors most often fall within.

### Body Language and Voice

| | Passive | Assertive | Aggressive |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eye Contact** | Avoids eye contact | Direct | Glaring, looking down |
| **Facial Expression** | Tense | Appropriate to the content of verbal message | |
| **Posture** | Slouched | Erect, but not stiff | Rigid |
| **Gestures** | Fidgeting, "hiding" behind arms, legs, nervous gestures | Open, not closed, gestures for emphasis, not fidgety | Pointing fingers fist, hands on hips, violates others' personal space |
| **Voice** | Lacks confidence | Congruent with verbal message, sincere, confident | Demanding or sarcastic |
| **Volume** | Too quiet | Well projected | Loud |
| **Pace** | Too slow, halting | Evenly paced | Too fast |

*Body Language and Voice* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 3
# *Communication with Families*

**Discussion 1**

This section has been added to reinforce the importance of confidentiality, roles, and responsibilities. Discuss the difficulties that occur when the paraprofessional is put in the middle of situations between the individual's work setting and home. Brainstorm ways to avoid problems. Remind students what is and isn't their responsibility.

Sometimes paraprofessionals know students or clients better than almost anyone else because of the close relationship they have with individuals on a daily basis. This often creates a strong bond between the paraprofessional and each client/student. In many cases, the paraprofessional is also the bus aide and rides to and from school or work with the individual, which means the paraprofessional often has daily contact with the parents. It's natural for parents to meet the bus and ask, "Well, how did things go today?" It's also natural for paraprofessionals to establish relationships with the parents that are more consistent and regular than any other staff person. It would be easy for the paraprofessional to share information, in a casual way, that in other circumstances would never be shared. These are tricky situations. The paraprofessional must remember a few basic rules:

- Establish some ground rules with your supervisor if you're in daily contact with parents so you know clearly what communication is appropriate and what isn't. Ask for clear boundaries or guidelines.
- It may be efficient for you to deliver written contact to parents, but make sure the parents understand that you're only delivering information on behalf of the teacher/supervisor.
- Remember the rules of confidentiality at *all* times. Do not share information about other students/clients under any circumstances, unless otherwise advised.
- Remember that the teacher/supervisor is the person responsible for setting up instruction and planning for the individual. If the parent has concerns or questions, tell them you will give the information to the proper person, or ask them to make that contact. Never put yourself in a position where you're making decisions with parents that you don't have the authority to make.
- Make sure that the student/client knows that you are not to be placed in the middle of situations between home and the school/organization.

# Section 4
# *Good Communication with Supervisors*

### Problem-Solving Techniques

**Discussion 1**

How can these problem-solving strategies enhance communication between paraprofessionals and their supervisors?

**Show Transparency 5.4**

In working side by side, day after day with your supervisor, you're bound to have differences in the way each of you would handle different situations. These may be differences revolving around procedures, personal issues, or techniques. It may be that the two of you have different perceptions, or perhaps you have clashing emotional needs. The conflict may come from a source as basic (and common) as having limited resources and deciding how to use them.

Conflict isn't necessarily negative. There are positive functions of conflict that are important to remember when working through differences. Some of those positives are:

- Questioning makes people have to clarify their position.
- Questioning helps others looks at different perceptions, concerns, and interests.
- Questioning encourages others to look for new facts.
- Questioning provides a source for developing more specific and long lasting solutions.

- Questioning gives the opportunity to establish mutual trust.
- Questioning results in personal and social change.
- Questioning prevents situations from getting worse.

The following series of problem-solving techniques was developed by Anna Lou Pickett (1988). You may find these helpful in improving your ability to work better in a team and with your supervisor.

- **Identifying and Describing the Problem.** A situation must be seen and clearly understood before it can be resolved. It isn't always easy to put a problem into words, but if it can't be stated clearly, it will be impossible to choose a course of action that will lead to a satisfactory solution. Each person must describe the situation in his or her own words and from their point of view. This can be done by asking questions like: "What is the problem?" "Who is involved?" "Who is affected?" "How are they affected?"
- **Defining and Determining the Cause of the Problem.** It's essential, next, to determine what caused the problem. Was it caused by outside conditions (such as contractual agreements, budget crunches, etc.)? In this case, the team may have little control over the situation, but can work together to decide how to "survive" the situation together or work to change it. The cause may be a misunderstanding of job roles and responsibilities. The problem may be caused by a difference in values, attitudes, age, work experience, education, cultural heritage, religious beliefs, or other personal traits. Whatever the cause, it must be clearly determined.
- **Deciding on a Goal and Identifying Alternatives.** Now you can develop strategies. Ask yourselves: "What do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" All those who are involved in the conflict should brainstorm a list of solutions. More information may be needed in some areas to have a workable list of solutions. Take the time to get all the information needed.
- **Selecting and Implementing a Course of Action.** All those participating in the brainstorming should decide which solution will fit the best for all involved. Everyone must agree on the solution, try it out and see if it works, and get back together to revise or change the plan as needed. Before making any changes, though, each party should give the solution enough time to see if it will work since new behaviors and skills don't often change easily.
- **Evaluating the Results.** Revising and changing to meet the needs is essential. No solution is ever permanent. The group should regularly evaluate the solution and make adjustments

as needed. If the solution isn't working, maybe help from outside sources is needed.

*Problem-Solving Techniques* reprinted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1988). *A training program for paraprofessionals working with special education and related services.* New York: City University of New York, National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services.

## Problem-Solving Work Session

It's essential to work through differences in order for the paraprofessional and the teacher, supervisor, or the larger team to succeed in providing the best service possible for the clients or students. The following checklists can help you solve problems and help you refocus as a team:

## The Breakdown Checklist

Maybe the two of you aren't sure where the breakdown in communication took place. There is such tremendous diversity of experience and focus in the nature of your jobs. It's important to remember that you both have the right to be different and to be honored for your differences. Going through the exercise called *Breakdown Checklist* can help pinpoint the problem areas. You can go through these questions together or individually. Just the act of doing the worksheet can be the spark that helps resolve the situation because as you answer the questions, the problem area will become obvious. Then you can talk through the problem and come to a solution.

**Directions:** Respond with a *yes* or *no* to each question. You can make your responses together or individually. If you choose to work individually, have your supervisor use the appropriate checklist column (S), fold it under and then have the paraprofessional check appropriate column (P). Then discuss similarities and differences between your responses.

| | *Response* P | S |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Am I sharing information about student performance and growth? | ____ | ____ |
| 2 Are we conferencing frequently enough? | ____ | ____ |
| 3 Do we set aside time to applaud each other's successes? | ____ | ____ |
| 4 Do I recognize my partner's freedom to reject as well as accept solutions? | ____ | ____ |
| 5 Do we need to work specifically on any of these areas? | | |
| A Territoriality | ____ | ____ |
| B Joint Responsibility | ____ | ____ |
| C Job Descriptions | ____ | ____ |

### Activity 1

The focus of the *Breakdown Checklist* and the *Solutions Checklist* is to promote a model for attacking *problems* rather than *people*. Students will choose a partner and, using the *Breakdown Checklist*, role play with a typical work issue such as the situation at the top of page 62.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| D | Goal Setting | ____ | ____ |
| E | Student Evaluations | ____ | ____ |
| F | Role Clarity | ____ | ____ |
| 6 | Are we setting expectations too high? | ____ | ____ |
| 7 | Are we setting expectations too low? | ____ | ____ |
| 8 | Do I focus on present and future issues not past difficulties? | ____ | ____ |
| 9 | Do I describe to my partner not judge? | ____ | ____ |
| 10 | Do I focus on specifics rather than generalities when I talk? | ____ | ____ |
| 11 | Am I focusing on issues and goals not personalities? | ____ | ____ |

*Breakdown Checklist* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991) *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

**Activity 2**

Students will use the same situation (or another you make up) to work through the *Solutions Checklist.* After this exercise, ask students to share some reactions to the process of the exercises and some outcomes they had with their partners. Relate these outcomes to actual situations.

**Activity 3**

As homework for next session, provide students with additional copies of these checklists to go through with their supervisor or a coworker, or a family member if they aren't in a work setting that would be appropriate. Tell students to be prepared to discuss the outcome at the next class session.

## Solutions Checklist: Differences Lead to Solutions

If the problem continues or gets worse after completing the *Breakdown Checklist,* the *Solutions Checklist* will provide a collaborative structure for problem solving. Notice that four steps exist in this model: *separate, focus, generate,* and *develop.* Each requires that you create your response, record your partner's response, and develop a joint response. You will need two copies of the worksheet – one for each of you. This may seem like an elaborate process for problem solving, but if you practice it as an exercise in class and with your supervisor, it will eventually become an automatic, natural way of dealing with issues.

**1 Separate**

Separate people from the problem. Differences in issue disputes are generally defined by differences in perception between you and your partner. The goal is to reduce the areas of conflict in perception.

- Your Response: *I think the problem is:*

  _____

- Partner's Response: *My partner thinks the problem is:*

  _____

- Joint Response: *Together we think the problem is:*

  _____

**2 Focus**

Focus on interests, not personal positions. For every interest there usually exists several possible positions that could satisfy it. Every personal position generally supports only one interest.

Therefore, in order to develop mutual solutions to support several positions, the two of you should focus on clarifying interests. The goal is to identify interests behind positions.

- Your Responses:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *A behavior I am exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

  *A behavior _____ is exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

- Partner's Responses:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *A behavior I am exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

  *A behavior _____ is exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

- Joint Response:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *Our behaviors are:*

  _____

  *Other people's behaviors are:*

  _____

**3 Generate**

Generate a variety of options. The two of you aren't trying to search for a single answer but are trying to broaden options available by generating multiple alternatives. The goal is to invent creative options.

- Your Options: *Three alternatives I see for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

- Partner's Options: *Three alternatives my partner sees for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

- Joint Options: *Three alternatives we see for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

**4 Develop**

Develop solutions based on criteria. The more the two of you apply standards of fairness, efficiency, and resource availability to bear on problems, the more likely you will produce a solution based on consensus. The goal is to choose and implement an option based on objective criteria.

- Your Response: *I would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- Partner's Response: *I would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- Joint Response: *We would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- As the teacher, I will:

- As the paraprofessional, I will:

- We have the following materials:

- We can consult the following resources:

- We can ask _____ to assist by:

- We can implement this option by (*date*) _____ and evaluate its effectiveness by observing the following:

*Solutions Checklist* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991) *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Problem Solving Role Play Situation

Another way to develop problem-solving skills and work through difficult situations is by role playing. Role playing is the process of acting out a scenario with others and practicing different responses to a situation. For practice with problem-solving techniques, role play the situation below with a partner.

> Without the opportunity to talk it through with your supervisor, you decided a student was ready to ride the bus to work unsupervised. Part of that decision came because you were "shorthanded," many other paraprofessionals and staff members were out sick, and your supervisor was unavailable to help make this quick decision. The client/student made the trip okay, but had some fears that he or she expressed rather aggressively on return. You, therefore, were held responsible for making the wrong decision.

- What are the issues to resolve in this situation?

- Did the paraprofessional make the right choice of how to handle this situation "in a pinch"?

- After the situation had occurred, how do you think the paraprofessional should have talked to the student about what happened?

- To the supervisor?

# *Summary*

Effective communication is a key element in creating a productive and enjoyable work environment. Whether you're working with a student, his or her family, or your supervisor, it's important to communicate as openly and as clearly as possible. Listening closely to the person with whom you are communicating will prove invaluable in avoiding misunderstandings. Recognizing and respecting differences and similarities in attitudes, feelings, cultures, and expectations of others will enhance your ability to communicate with the individuals with whom you work and those in your everyday life.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- Think of a problem you're having at work (or one that you've had recently). How will you go about solving it using one of the techniques discussed in this chapter?
- A parent wants to set up a meeting to discuss his or her child's education plan. What do you do?
- You don't feel your supervisor is really listening to you regarding one of your students. How do you go about improving your ability to communicate and his or her ability to listen?

**Activity 4**

Students will do the activities *One-Way & Two-Way Communication* found in Appendix C. Students will need a clean sheet of paper for the exercises (which appear in their editions of this module). After these exercises, discuss what happened. What was the communication like in the first exercise? How did that make the students feel? What was the difference between the feelings students had in the first exercise and the second exercise? Ask students what they feel caused the difference.

# 6

## *Chapter Six*

# Learning Styles


65 Introduction

65 Section 1: Identifying Your Personal Learning Styles

67 Section 2: How to Use Learning Style Information

70 Summary

70 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

One of the most important aspects of instructing others and receiving instructions yourself is understanding the different ways people learn. Some people learn best by seeing information; they are *visual learners*. Some learn best by hearing information; they are *auditory learners*. Some learn best by doing activities or by movement attached to the learning; they are *kinesthetic* or *hands-on learners*. These different ways of learning are called *learning styles*.

When people learn new information in a way that is most natural for them, they learn more easily and remember the information better. This is true for everyone. Understanding your learning style will help you understand not only how you learn but also how you train others to learn new information.

In your role as a paraprofessional, it's important for you to be aware of your learning styles to understand that:

- All people don't learn in the same way.
- What sometimes appears to be an aspect of learning style may be related to an individual's cultural experience or tradition.
- It's important to use a variety of techniques when giving direction and instruction.
- Although it may be easier for you to instruct with techniques using your own learning style, it might not be the best way for the individual you're teaching.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand characteristics of learners who possess different learning styles.
- Recognize how your learning style affects the way you learn and/or teach others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of strategies to effectively teach students with different learning styles.

## Section 1

# *Identifying Your Personal Learning Styles*

### The ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory

The *ELSIE* (*Edmund's Learning Style Identification Exercise*) was developed by Harry Reinert of Edmund's High School in Washington state. This exercise can be used to help people understand

**Discussion 1**

How does learning style affect the way one learns and/or teaches others?

**Activity 1**

The *ELSIE* inventory is being given as a way to learn more about learning styles in general and about a student's particular learning style. The purpose of learning about personal learning styles is to be able to relate better to others and understand that all people do not learn or react to learning (new settings) in the same way. Spend enough time, as the facilitator, to make the purpose clear and alleviate any anxiety students might feel. The *ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory* and instructions for administering and interpreting it can be found in Appendix D.

**Show Transparency 6.1**

which study techniques and learning methods might be most effective for them and is based on the idea that methods for learning the most efficiently vary from individual to individual. This is only a tool to learn more about yourself.

As you complete the *ELSIE*, which can be found in Appendix D, it's important for you to remember these facts about any single learning styles inventory:

- Any inventory is just a guide to what you already know about yourself.
- Each person has an individual style. No style is right or wrong.
- You aren't "stuck" with one style. Look at the inventory as a whole and what it tells you about yourself.
- The results of this or any inventory vary depending on your mood or state of mind. Use the results as an indicator of your preferred learning style and not as a final verdict.
- Your learning style may vary from situation to situation. When put in a situation where you have to use another way to learn, you're probably able to do that just fine. This inventory just indicates that, when given a choice, this is your preferred style.

## The ELSIE Results

What does the *ELSIE* tell you about yourself now that you have taken the inventory and scored it? The four key areas are described below with a guide to interpreting the scores:

1 **Visualization.** This category indicates the relative importance to the learner of actually seeing objects and activities in order to learn.

2 **Written Word.** This category is distinguished from the first by noting whether a person will get more details from a certain incident by seeing the event occur (visualization) or by reading a description of the event (written word). Persons scoring very high in this category have a great dependence on the written word. Persons scoring very low in this category may read quite well, but tend to translate written words into another category (visual images or sounds) rather than being able to get meaning from the words immediately.

3 **Auditory (Listening).** This category indicates the degree to which the person is able to learn from hearing the spoken language without recourse to some other mode. Persons scoring very high in this category will find audio tapes an invaluable aid in learning. Those who score very low will probably need to work to increase comprehension of the spoken language.

4 **Feeling (Activity).** This category represents how important some manner of physical activity is to the learning process. A person scoring above the median band in this category will

find it a definite advantage to become physically active in some way in order to facilitate learning. Such activities can be as simple as taking notes, writing out exercises, or pacing the floor while memorizing. Persons who score fairly high in this category are usually compulsive note-takers in class but seldom need to refer to their notes at a later time because the activity of writing seems to impress the information on their memory.

The most critical factor in interpreting the profile is to evaluate the scores in all four categories in relation to one another and not in isolation. Remembering that scores falling in the 0 or ± 1 range are very close to the norm, we may assume the individual is able to operate effectively with such scores (i.e., material presented in these modes will be neither excessively difficult nor automatically imprinted in the memory). Since the fourth category (activity) is primarily supplementary, a score in the +2 band or above requires that scores in the other bands be read approximately one band higher than they appear on the chart.

For example, if a person has -1 in visualization, 0 in written word, -3 in listening, and +3 in activity, this would indicate that the person could learn effectively by either seeing pictures or reading, but it would be very important for the person to be physically involved, perhaps by underlining passages in a book or taking notes, by drawing his or her own versions of pictures, by participating in skits, etc.

## Section 2
# *How to Use Learning Style Information*

When you evaluate your graph from the *ELSIE Learning Style Identification Exercise*, it's important to look at the whole chart, rather than just the highs and lows. The highest range areas, however, are probably the learning style areas in which you learn information most easily. For this reason, when studying new information, use the learning mode where you have the greatest strength. The areas of strength (high points on your graph) also probably indicate the way you would choose to give or receive instruction.

With this new (or reinforced) information about your learning style, consider the following tips when receiving or giving instruction. Remember, people don't all learn the same way, so you must ask for instruction in a way that works best for you (or adapt the information on your own), and you must give information to others in more than just your own preferred style.

**Discussion 1**

Discuss the strategies for working with students who have different learning styles. Ask students to share examples of strategies they use to accommodate for their own learning styles as well as those of others.

### Visualization

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by actually seeing and observing objects and activities. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Highlighting the important facts in printed information.
- Color-coding information. For example, you might use colored highlighters for different types of information: pink = *urgent*; green = *remember this*; yellow = *key terminology*. Another example is to use different colored folders for different groups.
- Using videotapes to illustrate and support information, procedures, or demonstrations.
- Labeling equipment by name and materials.
- Making drawings to help the understanding of concepts.
- Making outlines of key facts, timelines, charts, and graphs.

### Written Word

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by seeing or reading a description of a procedure or activity. You most likely rely on the written word to learn information. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Organizing class notes into outlines.
- Highlighting key points in directions, instructions, texts, etc.
- Using flashcards for learning key information.
- Getting more written information on the same topic.
- Getting a copy of lecture notes or outline of key information.
- Asking for written instructions.

### Listening

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by hearing the spoken word, without the need to rely on any other mode. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Using audiotapes to learn information or reinforce learning.
- Encouraging participation in discussions.
- Asking for instructions to be read aloud.
- Getting printed material in audiotape version.
- Asking for directions to be given aloud.
- Sitting close to the instructor. Write down only the key points. Spend most of your time listening, because it's your strength.

- Asking to explain back to the person what you heard for verification that you have a clear understanding of the information.
- Making checklists to support what you heard.

### Activity

If you scored high in the area of physical activity, you probably need some form of physical activity to help you learn. Examples that will support this strength in your learning and instruction you give to others are:

- Taking notes. Even if you don't read them later, the activity of taking the notes will enhance your learning.
- Completing or creating writing assignments as a way of restating the information through the act of writing.
- Pacing the floor, washing the dishes, housecleaning – doing *some activity* while memorizing information.
- Getting involved in "hands-on" demonstrations.
- Volunteering to help set up or take down learning activities.
- "Walking through" directions or procedures.
- Manipulating materials to learn how to use them.
- Constructing, drawing, or making models to teach yourself.
- Using the computer to reinforce learning.

### Putting the ELSIE to Work

Think of situations when you were in school that were really hard for you. Could those learning situations have been easier for you if you'd known about your learning style?

Think of one situation and how, knowing what you know now about your learning style, you would handle that situation differently. Use the following worksheet to write down the situation and your new approach. Be ready to share this in discussion.

1 Name a learning situation that was difficult for you when you were in school or on a job.

2 What was your learning style ?

3 What was the teacher's (or supervisor's) teaching style?

#### Activity 1

Students will answer the questions in the *Putting the ELSIE to Work* activity. Ask them to share their responses. Discuss how this exercise can or will affect their interactions with individuals with whom they work.

4 What did you do to be successful in that learning situation?

5 Why did that work well for you? If it didn't, why?

6 From what you've learned about your personal learning style from the *ELSIE*, how would you handle that situation differently today? List some requests you would make of the teacher or ways you would structure your learning.

## *Summary*

This chapter has focused on ways you can identify learning styles in yourself and in others. An understanding of your personal learning style will help you with training and working with others.

As you find out more about your learning style, think about how it affects the ways you do things at home or socially. How does your learning style affect the way you work with students?

When working with students, try to become aware of their learning styles. This is most easily done by observing their work and behavior in class. It's important to remember that all people don't learn in the same way. Using a variety of teaching strategies when working with students will help you choose the most effective instructional methods possible.

## *Questions to Ponder*

1 How does your learning style affect the way you work with others?

2 Do you and your supervisor do things in the same way? Are your styles different or the same?

3 Do you sometimes have conflicts with others about how to do something because you feel your way is right, when it might actually be a conflict between your learning styles?

7

*Chapter Seven*

# Stress & Burnout on the Job


71 Introduction

71 Section 1: What is Stress?

74 Section 2: Stress Management

79 Summary

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# *Introduction*

**Show Transparency 7.1**

There's a very high cost to avoiding conflict or resolving conflict. The highest price is a high level of stress on the job. The following is a list of what can lead to stress:

- Built up resentments that eventually explode.
- Taking out resentments on an innocent person who isn't involved in the conflict at all, like the client/student or another staff member.
- Gossiping and back-biting.
- Creating a poisoned work environment that leads to high stress for the whole staff as well as the students/clients.
- Stress-related illnesses for you and others.
- A sense of powerlessness in your job.
- Institutional practices that are rigid and inflexible.
- Poor personal time-management skills.
- Boredom; lack of challenge in the job.
- Poor quality relationships.
- Overload on the job.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the difference between stress and distress.
- Understand the stages of stress and burnout and recognize if and how it may affect one's life.
- Understand and describe strategies to help you relax and handle stress and distress on and off the job.

## Section 1
## *What is Stress?*

**Discussion 1**

What are some measures for handling stress on the job and at home? How can we learn the art of relaxation? How can friends be used to alleviate stress and help us relax?

What do all of these people and situations have in common?

- A nineteen-year-old boy learns his girlfriend has been killed in an auto accident.
- A business person loses an important business deal to his or her competitor.
- An athlete receives a first-place award at a track event.
- A fifteen-year-old girl approaches a boy to ask him out for the first time.

*Stress.* This may surprise you because the last two situations both

**Activity 1**

Students will read Section 1 and discuss how to get a handle on stress.

**Show Transparency 7.2**

involve happy events. The fact is that it does not matter whether the situation is pleasant or unpleasant, according to Hans Selye, M.D. What counts is the intensity of the demand it places on you to readjust. The late Dr. Selye, author of *The Stress of Life* and numberous other books on stress, calls these incidents *stressors.*

He states that the physical reaction of the body to stress is basically the same regardless of the stressor. Furthermore, he feels that the only complete freedom from stress is death. Humans thrive on stress because it makes life more interesting.

No matter what you're doing, you're under some amount of stress. Even while you sleep, your body must continue to function and react to the stress imposed by dreaming. Stress comes from two basic forces: the stress of physical activity and the stress of mental/emotional activity. It's interesting to note that stress from emotional frustration is more likely to produce diseases such as ulcers, than is stress from physical work or exercise. In fact, physical exercise can relax you and help you deal with mental stress.

## Stress or Distress?

Dr. Selye feels that there is a type of stress that can be harmful. He calls it *distress.* Distress is continual stress that causes you to constantly readjust or adapt. For example, having a job you don't like can be constantly frustrating and frustration is bad stress. If this distress lasts long enough, it can result in fatigue, exhaustion, and even physical or mental breakdown. The best way to avoid it is to choose an environment that allows you to do the activities you enjoy, that are meaningful to you. Your friends, your work, and even your mate can be sources of challenging good stress or harmful distress.

Dr. Selye also believes that the absence of work isn't necessarily a way to avoid stress. An example of this is the retired person who finds him- or herself with nothing to do. Boredom then becomes an enemy capable of causing tremendous distress. Work is actually good for you as long as you can achieve something by doing it. It will only wear you out if it becomes frustrating because of failure or a lack of purpose.

To avoid distress you should seek work or tasks that:

- You are capable of doing
- You really enjoy
- Other people appreciate

## Body Reactions to Stress

Regardless of the source of stress, states Dr. Selye, your body has a three-stage reaction to it.

**Stage l: Alarm**

In the alarm stage, your body recognizes the stressor and prepares for fight or flight. This is done by a release of hormones from the endocrine glands. These hormones will cause an increase in heartbeat and respiration, elevation in blood-sugar level, increase in perspiration, dilated pupils, and slowed digestion. You will then choose whether to use this burst of energy to fight or flee.

**Show Transparency 7.3**

**Stage 2: Resistance**

In the resistance stage, your body repairs any damage caused from the stress. If however the stressor does not go away, the body cannot repair the damage and must remain alert. This plunges you into the third stage – exhaustion.

**Stage 3: Exhaustion**

If this stage continues long enough, you may develop one of the diseases of stress – migraine headaches, heart irregularity, or even mental illness. Continued exposure to stress during the exhaustion stage causes the body to run out of energy, and may even stop bodily functions.

Since you can't build a life completely free from stress or even distress, it's important that you develop some ways of dealing with stress.

Portions of Section 1 above were adapted with permission from Selye, H. (1976). *The stress of life* (pp. 1-14; 73-80). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

## Stages of Burnout

**Stage One: Enthusiasm**

- A period of exitement, hard work, and job satisfaction. Energy reserves are used up with this exuberance.

**Stage Two: Stagnation**

- Emphasis at work changes to a focus on personal needs, family, and friends.
- Job dissatisfaction and inefficiency increase.
- Escape activities like smoking, drinking, excessive eating, shopping sprees may be present ("I work hard. I deserve it.").

**Stage Three: Frustration**

- Negative feelings about the job and the organization grow more severe.
- Effectiveness on the job begins to suffer.
- Feelings of anger and depression can persist.

**Activity 2**

Discuss these stages of burnout. Ask the group for examples of each stage. Ask for examples of healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with stress.

**Stage Four: Apathy**

- In response to feeling trapped in the position, minimal effort is exerted at work.
- Deep pessimism and self-doubt can be present.
- Physical illnesses can grow from minor discomforts to more serious symptoms.

**Stage Five: Intervention**

- In an attempt to break out of the dangerous burnout cycle, people often change jobs within the organization or move to a new organization, sometimes in a completely new field.
- A person's current working conditions can sometimes be modified to create a more acceptable and enjoyable environment.
- At this stage, it is important to begin balancing work life with personal life and leisure activities.

*Stages of Burnout* adapted with permission from Edelwich, J., with Brodsky, A. (1980). *Burnout: Stages of disillusionment in the helping professions.* New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc., 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013.

**Activity 3**

Students will take the *Burnout Test.* After scoring it, discuss the significance of the results in terms of personal and work life. Here are the results categories:

| | |
|---|---|
| 0-15 | You're doing fine. |
| 16-21 | There are things you should watch. |
| 22-30 | You're a candidate. |
| 31-39 | You're burning out. |
| 40+ | Distinct threat to your health and well-being. |

## Activity: *Burnout Test*

How have the following changed over the last 6 to 12 months? Using a 6 point scale (0-5), score 0 for no change and up to 5 for the greatest amount of change.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Do you tire more easily? Feel fatigued rather than energetic? | ____ |
| 2 | Are you working harder and harder and accomplishing less? | ____ |
| 3 | Are you increasingly cynical and disenchanted? | ____ |
| 4 | Do you often experience a sadness you can't explain? | ____ |
| 5 | Are you forgetting appointments, deadlines, personal possessions? | ____ |
| 6 | Are you increasingly irritable? More short tempered? | ____ |
| 7 | Are you seeing close friends and family members less frequently? | ____ |
| 8 | Are you suffering from physical symptoms (aches, pains, lingering illnesses)? | ____ |
| 9 | Are you unable to laugh at a joke about yourself? | ____ |
| *Total* | | ____ |

From *Burnout: The high cost of high achievement* by Herbert J. Freudenberger. Copyright © 1980 by Herbert J. Freudenberger and Geraldine Richelson. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

# Section 2
# *Stress Management*

## What Can I Do if Stress is Affecting My Job?

You should recognize that stress has a lifelong influence on you. What can you do about handling it? Doctors have come up with a few suggestions on how to live with stress.

1 **Work out stress:** If you're angry or upset, try to blow off steam physically by activities such as running, playing tennis, or gardening. Even taking a walk can help. Physical activity allows you a "fight" outlet for mental stress.

2 **Talk out your worries:** It helps to share worries with someone you trust and respect. This may be a friend, family member, clergyman, teacher, or counselor. Sometimes another person can help you see a new side to the problem and thus a new solution. It you find yourself becoming preoccupied with emotional problems, it might be wise to seek a professional listener, like a guidance counselor or psychologist. Doing this isn't admitting defeat, but rather is admitting you know when to ask for assistance.

3 **Learn to accept what you can't change:** If the problem is beyond your control at this time, try your best to accept it until you *can* change it. It beats spinning your wheels and getting nowhere.

- **Avoid self-medication:** Although there are many chemicals, including alcohol, that can mask stress symptoms, they don't help you adjust to the stress itself. Many are habit-forming, so the decision to use them should be made with your doctor. The ability to handle stress comes from within.
- **Get enough sleep and rest:** Lack of sleep can reduce your ability to deal with stress by making you more irritable. Most people need at least seven to eight hours of sleep out of every twenty-one hours. If stress repeatedly prevents you from sleeping, you should inform your doctor.
- **Be aware of what stresses you:** Notice how your body responds to stress. Think of the situations you're in that cause your body to react. What can you do in those situations to lessen the stress?
- **Examine your life-style:** Are you under stress because your priorities are out of order? Are you under stress because you're trying to do too much? What kind of balance do you need in your life to lessen the stress? What can you do about it? Make a list of aspects of your life that need to change to lessen the

**Discussion 1**

What are some measures for dealing with stress on the job and at home? How can we learn the art of relaxation? How can friends be used to alleviate stress and help us relax?

**Show Transparency 7.4**

stress in your life. Highlight the ones you can control. Make plans to start by changing just one of those.

- **Set realistic and achievable goals:** One way of becoming stressed is by trying to do too much. We often do that by over-scheduling or over-booking ourselves. Set realistic plans you can accomplish and feel good about afterwards.
- **Simplify your life in as many ways as possible:** Some ways to simplify are to get organized by grouping essential tasks and errands together, to ask for help when you need it, and to remain focused on your responsibilities.
- **Exercise:** When you exercise you feel better and you have more energy. Exercising is a great time to think about solutions to daily problems while relieving the stresses of the day. Set up a daily exercise program, no matter how simple.
- **Eat properly:** Eat regular, well balanced meals. This helps your energy level and helps you concentrate and keep a good perspective. Avoid overuse of caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes.
- **Change the way you start the day:** Make a plan for yourself to "get up on the *right* side of the bed". What does that mean for you? Think about how you can "spoil" yourself in some simple ways to make your day start out better for you.
- **Start the work day with the most difficult tasks:** When you have them behind you, you will feel a sense of accomplishment that will help you be more successful the rest of the day.
- **Realize you have choices.** If you have tried everything to alleviate the stress in your job, if you have given the job your very best, you may need to realize this job isn't for you. It's not a given that every job will work out. Some jobs just aren't healthy. Everyone has to strike their own balance with what works for them. You need to determine that and realize you have a choice to leave or stay. Maybe the best choice is another job.

*What Can I Do if Stress is Affecting My Job?* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

## My Stress List

You can determine how much stress you're under in your current situation by completing the following questions. Check each item in either column that describes your current job. If you check five or more items in Column 1, you probably experience very little or no stress on your current job. You may find it routine or boring. You may need to seek activities to keep active. If you checked five or more items in Column 2, you're facing high stress levels and will probably want to look at strategies for reducing stress.

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|
| I don't have enough responsibility. | I have too much responsibility. |
| I have too much training for my job. | I wish I had more training so I could do a better job. |
| My job lacks variety. | My job is too challenging. |
| I often have too much time on my hands. | I don't have time to visit with friends because of my work. |
| I have to force myself to stay alert. | My work continues at so fast a pace that I have no recovery time. |
| I sometimes have to search for things to do. | I find I often have to take work home with me. |
| **Total** _____ | **Total** _____ |

*My Stress List* adapted with permission from Baron, R.A. (1983). *Behavior in organizations.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

## What is Relaxation?

It's surprising how little Americans know about the art of relaxation. Relaxation is more than getting away from the work day grind, and it's more than the absence of stress. It's sometimes positive and satisfying – a feeling in which one experiences peace of mind. True relaxation requires becoming sensitive to a basic need for peace, self-awareness, thoughtful reflection, and the willingness to meet these needs rather than dismissing them.

The continuing pressures of everyday life take a heavy toll on the physical and mental well-being of millions of people each year. Medical research into the origins of common diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, and headaches shows a connection between stress and the development of such ailments. In the area of mental health, stress frequently underlies emotional and behavioral problems, including nervous breakdowns. Various environmental factors — from noise pollution and air pollution to economic disruptions, such as unemployment, inflation, and recession — can make living conditions, even more stressful. These conditions, in turn, can create a greater need for mental health services to help people cope more effectively with their environment.

In the course of a day, people are frequently distracted from their activities by personal problems — conflicts with family members, disagreements with employers, poor living or working conditions, boredom, loneliness — to name just a few. It's easy to get so preoccupied with living, thinking, organizing, existing, and working that a person disregards his or her needs for relaxation.

### Activity 1

Students will read *What is Relaxation?* and discuss the points that can be used to relieve stress and burnout through relaxation.

Most people reared in our production-oriented society feel guilty or ill-at-ease when not involved in accomplishing tasks. Even their vacations become whirl wind productions that leave the participants exhausted after concentrating too many experiences into a short period of time. Such behavior undermines the value of vacation time as an opportunity for diversion, calm, restoration of one's energy, and gaining new experiences.

## Secrets of Relaxation

Unfortunately, some people pursue relaxation with the same concern for time, productivity, and activity that they show in their everyday life patterns. Far too few people know how to turn off their body clocks and gain satisfaction out of just being instead of always striving. The secret in getting the best results from attempts at relaxation is simple: Find those activities which give you pleasure, and, when you pursue them, commit your energies to total mental and physical well-being. If your diversion results in an artistic product, musical skills, further education, a better physique, or whatever, that's great. But remember that relaxation, not achievement, is your main reason for participating in the activity.

Mental health specialists have come up with some suggestions for learning the art of relaxation:

- **Try something new and different.** Keep in mind this important rules of thumb when deciding on relaxation activities: Don't be afraid to try something new and different. Choose activities you really enjoy, not activities you think other people want you to pursue. The following are some activities worth thinking about:

1 Check out various community activities available through recreation departments, adult education programs, volunteer work opportunities, college courses, etc.

2 Consider exercise such as walking around your neighborhood, bicycling, dancing, playing golf, swimming, gardening, bowling, etc.

3 For the more physically fit, more strenuous exercise can prove most relaxing. Jogging, playing tennis, basketball, handball, squash, etc., can give one a feeling of wonderful relaxation after an intense workout.

4 Try some mental exercises to create a sense of peace and tranquility in body and mind. One such exercise involves concentration on relaxing successive sets of muscles from the tips of your toes to the muscles in your forehead and neck. Other mental relaxation techniques include getting fully involved with a good book, drifting into a quiet state with music, or focusing on a beautiful scene or drawing and losing oneself in it.

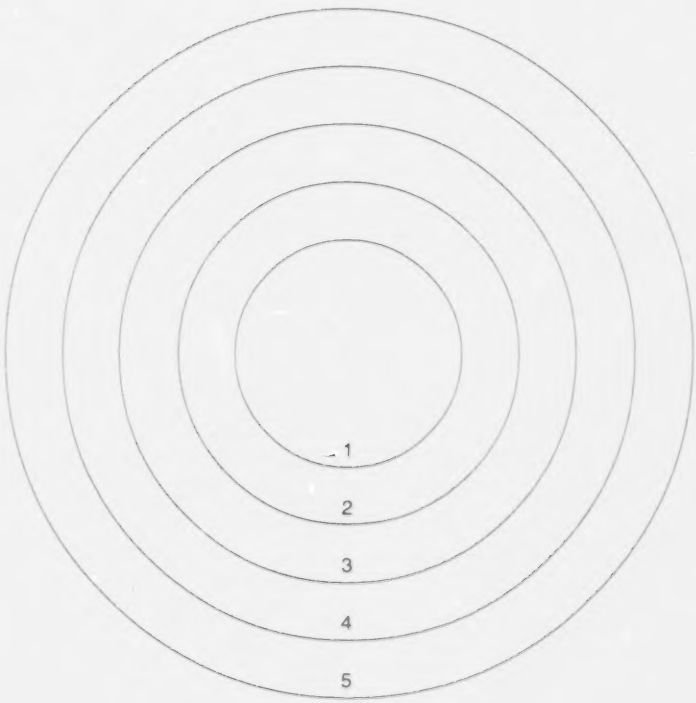
5 Creative activities such as painting, drawing, pottery, carpentry, knitting, and even cooking for fun can also give you a sense of accomplishment, as well as the peaceful relaxation of concentration on something you wish to do.

6 Whether or not the above suggestions for relaxation work in your case, a sure-fire method known down through the ages is the use of a warm bath to take away bodily stress and strain. You may choose to enhance this activity by reading a good book, listening to music, or even adding some bubbles if you like.

*Secrets of Relaxation* reprinted with permission from the Marketing Department, Boynton Health Services, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

## Circle of Friends

One of the best ways to alleviate stress and burnout is to have a good circle of friends. The following exercise is a good way for you to determine just who is in your circle of friends. Your instructor will give you directions.




### Activity 2

Tell students that one of the best ways to alleviate stress and burnout is to have a good circle of friends. Have them do the *Circle of Friends* activity as a closing activity to Module 1. This is a way to identify one's friends and those people on whom one can rely in times of stress. Friends offer benefits like:

- Personal development.
- Career productivity and success.
- Improved quality of life.
- Improved physical and psychological health.
- Help dealing constructively with stress.
- Self-actualization.

Tell students to fill in the circles starting from the center, where they should put themselves. In circle 2, they should put those who are closest to them and will always be there for them. In circle 3, they should put friends who aren't as close but are still important. Have them put acquaintances in circle 4 and paid helpers in the outermost circle (number 5).

After students finish, ask how this information can relate to their ability to deal with stress. Who in their circles can they turn to in times of stress? Why? Tell students to refer to these circles when they feel under stress and remember that friends are a viable way to deal with stress.

# *Summary*

Everyone experiences stress and distress from time to time in their lives. Paraprofessionals working directly with individuals with disabilities and their families often find themselves in demanding and stressful situations. It is important to identify the situations in which you typically feel stress and to develop strategies to avoid or alleviate that stress. Strategies such as exercising, getting enough sleep, meditating, and setting realistic, achievable goals are some ways that can help alleviate stress in your life. Friends are also a good source for dealing with stressful situations. Sometimes a sympathetic ear is enough to help you put things in perspective.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- What strategies have been most successful for you when dealing with stress?
- When do you feel most relaxed? What factors contribute to that feeling of relaxation? Can any of those factors be transferred to other situations in your life?
- What physical reactions do you feel when you are stressed?

# Appendices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## Appendix A
# *The Individualized Education Plan*

**IEP Meeting Date:** _____
**IEP Written Date:** _____
**Last Assessment Summary Report Date:** _____
**Progress Report Frequency:** _____

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

## A. STUDENT INFORMATION

| Student's Name | Sex M F | Grade | Birthdate | ID Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| Street Address<br>City, State, Zip | Native Language/Primary Communication Mode |
|---|---|
| | |

| School of Enrollment | School Telephone ( ) | Providing District Number |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Student's Permanent Resident Address (if different) | Resident District Number |
|---|---|
| | |

## B. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

| Parent(s)' Name(s) | Home Telephone ( ) | Daytime Telephone ( ) | School District Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| Parent's Address (if different) | Native Language/Primary Communication Mode |
|---|---|
| | |

Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Name(s) ❑ Guardian(s) ❑ Surrogate Parent(s)

| Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Address (if different) | Home Telephone ( ) | Daytime Telephone ( ) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

## C. IEP INFORMATION

| IEP Manager Name & Title | Telephone Number ( ) | Type of IEP: ❑ Initial ❑ Annual ❑ Interim |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Primary Disability | State Code | Secondary Disability(ies) | State Code(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

## D. IEP TEAM MEETING

| Title | Names of All Team Members | Indicate Attendance |
|---|---|---|
| Parent | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Parent | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Student | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| School District Representative | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Special Education Teacher | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| General Education Teacher (K-12 Only) | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |

*A copy is sent to the student's resident district when the student is not a resident of the providing district.*

Copies: Due Process File IEP Manager
Parent

This form is available in several languages, Braille, or other format. Contact the director of special education.

 Student's Name: _____

| E.1 | PROGRAM PLANNING |
|---|---|
| *Following initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.* | |

How the student's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the K-12 **general curriculum**:
(for students using Braille, includes how Braille will be implemented through integration with other classroom activities)
For **preschool** children or students age **18 – 22**, how the disability affects participation in **appropriate activities**:

**Summary of Strengths and Concerns (Optional)**

Student's **strengths:**

**Educational concerns** of parent(s) and student:

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, how the student's **interests** and **preferences** were **considered** and **included** if the student did not attend this IEP meeting:

 Student's Name: _____

**E.2 PROGRAM PLANNING**

**Performance Areas**

- ❑ Intellectual/Cognitive Functioning
- ❑ Academic Performance
- ❑ Functional Skills
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Motor Skills
- ❑ Emotional, Social, and Behavioral Development
- ❑ Sensory
- ❑ Health/Physical

***For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, use section E.3 (Transition Program Planning).***

***Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.***

**Present Level(s) of Educational Performance:**

**Student-based Needs:**

**Annual Goal:**
___ of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

**Annual Goal:**
___ of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

Student's Name: _____

| E.3 | TRANSITION PROGRAM PLANNING |
|---|---|
| **Transition Areas** *(All areas must be addressed.)* | ❑ Employment<br>❑ Post-Secondary Education & Training<br>❑ Community Participation<br>❑ Recreation/Leisure<br>❑ Home Living/Daily Living |

***Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.***

**Future Outcome/Goal:**

**Present Levels of Performance:**

**Student-based Needs:** *(for instruction, experiences, and related services)* ***If no need, provide rationale.***

**Activities Planned to Meet Future Outcome/Goal:** *(school courses/standards; home, community, and work experiences; and/or related services)* ***Identify who is accountable for each activity.***

**Annual Goal:**
___of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

**Annual Goal:**
___of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

 Student's Name: _____

## E.4 PROFILES OF LEARNING

*See documentation* attached to this IEP.

## F. ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

**F.1** **Adaptations** and the duration of these adaptations, including supplemental aids and services to be used in general and special education that will be made available **to the student** (e.g., grading, staff, transportation, facilities, materials, equipment, assistive technology devices and services, curriculum, methods, coordination of support services, vocational services and equipment, limited English proficiency services, school discipline policy, paraprofessional services, and other services):

**F.2** Program modifications or supports for **school personnel** that will be provided to meet the student's identified needs:

## G. RIGHTS AT AGE OF MAJORITY

*Address **only** in IEPs for students who will reach age 17 during the tenure of this IEP.*

❑ The student, upon reaching age 17, has been informed of the rights which will transfer to him/her upon reaching the age of majority (18), unless legal guardian or conservator has been appointed.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

 Student's Name: _____

## H.1 MINNESOTA STATEWIDE TESTING

***Address only in IEPs developed for grades 3, 5, 8, 10+.*** *Grade level to be covered:* _____

*(Check the appropriate box.)*

A. ☐ If applicable, the team plans for the following **accommodations** for test administration:
(Test **modifications** are not allowed for Statewide Testing.)

B. ☐ Student is **exempt**. The alternate assessment will be used.

1. Rationale for exemption:

## H.2 BASIC STANDARDS TESTING

***Address only in the IEP for grade 8 or above.***

Prior to Basic Standards Testing, the team determined the following standards for this student:

**Accommodations** if appropriate or if needed:

**Modifications** if appropriate or if needed:

If **exempt**, the reason:

If **exempt**, the alternate assessment(s) to be used:

*Check the appropriate box to indicate the level the student will attempt for testing:*

| | State | Individual * | Exempt ** | Passed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading: | | | | |
| Math: | | | | |
| Writing: | | | | |

* If the modification is to alter the district's passing level, **test score expected** to be achieved is entered.
** If the student is **exempt,** the goals on the IEP will be the criteria for awarding the diploma.

 Student's Name: _____

## I. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES TO MEET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Instruction or Service Provided | Location | | Anticipated Frequency | Total Minutes Per Week | | Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | General Education | Special Education | | Indirect | Direct | Start Date | Anticipated Duration |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

## J. EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

I.3 Are **extended school year services** required for this student? ❑ Yes ❑ No

**If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

## K. INTERAGENCY SERVICES

| Agency Name | Interagency/Organization Linkages *(Identify services, funding, responsibilities, etc.)* |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

## L. ALTERED SCHOOL DAY

Has this student's day been altered? ❑ Yes ❑ No **If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

 Student's Name: _____

## M. PLACEMENT DETERMINATION: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

### M.1 Activities With Students Without Disabilities

*Check the appropriate box(es).*

If in K-12, activities in which the student will be participating with students who do not have disabilities:

❑ **All** the following activities

❑ Core Subject Areas : _____

- ❑ Art
- ❑ Music
- ❑ Library
- ❑ Physical Education
- ❑ Assemblies
- ❑ Lunch
- ❑ School to Work
- ❑ Recess
- ❑ Field Trips

❑ Extracurricular Activities: _____

❑ Other: _____

### M.2 LRE Justification

**Other options** considered and why rejected, and **why** this student's disability requires service(s) in this setting:

### M.3 Federal Child Count Setting

*Check the appropriate box:*

| K – 12 + | | Setting | | ECSE Age 3 to Kindergarten Entrance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General Education (In special education less than 21%) | → | ❑ I. | ← | Early Childhood Setting or Homebased |
| Resource Room (21 to 60%) | → | ❑ II. | ← | Parttime EC Setting or Home and ECSE or Reverse Mainstreaming or Itinerant Services |
| Separate Class (more than 60%) | → | ❑ III. | ← | ECSE Classroom |
| Public Separate Day School | → | ❑ IV. | ← | Public Separate Day School |
| Private Separate Day School | → | ❑ V. | ← | Private Separate Day School |
| Public Residential | → | ❑ VI. | ← | Public Residential |
| Private Residential | → | ❑ VII. | ← | Private Residential |
| Homebased/Homebound/Hospital | → | ❑ VIII. | ← | Homebound/Hospital |

***Note: Provide Notice of Proposed Special Education Services***

# Appendix B
# *Information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium*

*http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

## State Laws Regarding Paraprofessionals

**State of Minnesota, Omnibus Education Bill of 1998**
**Article 2, Section 9**

(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

1. before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students which whom the paraprofessional works;
2. annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities; and
3. a districtwide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

## Guiding Principles for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

These principles were used to guide the development of competencies for Minnesota paraprofessionals during the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998.

- Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student-related activities.
- The entire instructional team participates within clearly-defined roles in a dynamic, changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.

- To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- By recognizing a paraprofessional's training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified and which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

## Core Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

The following core competencies are expected of all paraprofessionals working in Minnesota schools. These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed above. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

**Core Competency Statements**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| **1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education** | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K1** A sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions and values across cultures and the effect of the relationships among children, families, and schooling. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to individual learning needs. | | | X |
| **K3** Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding of the purposes and goals of education for all individuals. | | | X |
| **K5** Awareness of responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures. | | X | |
| **S1** Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

| **2. Characteristics of Learners** | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K1** Awareness of the similarities and differences among the cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs. | | | X |
| **K2** Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on an individual's life and family in the home, school, and community. | | | X |
| **K3** Awareness of characteristics and effects of the cultural, linguistic, and environmental background of the child and family. | | | X |
| **K4** Understanding of the effect of medications commonly prescribed for individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of the educational implications of the above factors. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of district's ability to provide for and use the tools of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. | | X | |
| **S1** With direction from a professional, make and document observations appropriate to the individual with learning needs. | | | X |
| **S2** Provide objective documentation of observations to appropriate professionals. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **4. Instructional Content and Practice** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of learning styles of individuals. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the demands and expectations of various learning environments. | | | X |
| **K3** Awareness of a variety of instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials. | | | X |
| **S1** Establish and maintain rapport with learners. | X | | |
| **S2** Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives. | | | X |
| **S3** Under the direction of a professional, assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the learner. | | | X |

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **S4** Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **5. Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of the environmental factors that affect teaching and learning, including health and safety issues. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning. | | | X |
| **K3** Understanding of strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of individuals with learning needs in various settings. | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness by the paraprofessional of how they impact the overall learning environment for students and staff. | | X | |
| **S1** Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy, learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures. | | X | |
| **S2** As directed, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning. | | | X |
| **S3** Use strategies that promote the learner's independence. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of behaviors. | | X | |
| **K3** Awareness of the factors that influence the behavior of individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of effective instructional practices that enhance the development of social skills. | | X | |
| **K6** Awareness of the range and implications of management approaches/strategies that influence the behavior of individual's with learning needs. | | X | |

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K7** Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behaviors. | | | X |
| **S2** Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior. | | | X |
| **S3** Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate. | | | X |
| **S4** Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of typical concerns of parents of individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the roles of individuals with learning needs, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program. | | X | |
| **S1** Use ethical practices for confidential communication about learners with learning needs. | | X | |
| **S2** Under the direction of a professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments. | | | X |
| **S3** Follow the instructions of the professional. | | X | |
| **S4** Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel. | | | X |
| **S5** Participate as requested in conferences with families or primary caregivers as members of the educational team. | | | X |
| **S6** Use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities. | | | X |
| **S7** Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families. | | | X |
| **S8** Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences. | | | X |



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| Additions: | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices** | | | |
| **K1** Recognition of the paraprofessional as a positive role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential. | X | | |
| **S2** Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel. | | X | |
| **S3** Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraprofessional. | | X | |
| **S4** Demonstrate respect for culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of students. | X | | |
| **S5** Demonstrate a willingness to participate in ongoing staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback. | X | | |
| **S6** Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including oral and written communication. | X | | |
| **S7** Practice within the context of written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed. | | X | |
| Additions: | | | |

Core competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998, and are based on the competencies found in: Council on Exceptional Children (1998). *What every special educator must know, 3rd ed.* Minneapolis, MN: Author. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para.*

## Specialized Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

In addition to the core competencies, the following specialized competencies are expected of paraprofessionals working in specific positions (early childhood, transition to work, behavior management, academic program assistants, and physical/other health impairments). These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed on page 91. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

**Early Childhood**
**Specialized Competency Statements**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Early Childhood, Home Visitor Programs** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children. | | | X |
| **K2** Understanding of their role in listening and communicating with parents to gather information which the service delivery team can build on to meet the needs of the child and family. | X | | |
| **K3** Awareness of health care providers, social services and other resources available in the community to assist parents and their child. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding their role in enhancing parent interactions with their child by demonstrating effective techniques/materials to stimulate cognitive, physical, social and language development. | | X | |
| Additions: | | | |
| **2. Early Childhood,Center Based Programs** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of basic developmental stages, ages 0-5. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing and implementing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children. | | | X |
| **S1** Ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play, and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to gather information about the performance of children in all areas of development and to share it with professional colleagues. | | X | |
| **S3** Demonstrate competence in preparing and using developmentally appropriate materials, under the direction of a professional. | | X | |
| **S4** Demonstrate an understanding of the paraprofessional's role in communicating and working effectively with parents, other primary caregivers, and team members. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Transition to Work and Adult Life**
**Specialized Competencies**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| 1. Transition to Work and Adult Life | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K1** Understanding of the need for transition-related services. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of how to access information on community resources available to individuals with disabilities of transition age and their families. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of the importance of inter-agency collaboration. | | X | |
| **K4** Knowledge of the ethical and legal standards of conduct in relationships with students, parents, adult service providers, employers, and coworkers. | | X | |
| **S1** Understanding of transition-related assessment strategies and ability to provide team with information useful to the development of transition-related goals and objectives. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to facilitate and support student involvement in decision making. | | X | |
| **S3** Ability to identify and develop accommodations and natural supports in the work setting. | | X | |
| **S4** Knowledge of and ability to provide instruction and support in leisure skills, social skills, self-determination skills, community mobility skills, and independent living skills. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to provide instruction and support in work-related behaviors, job-seeking skills, and job-specific skills in school or at a community work site. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Behavior Management**
**Specialized Competency Statements**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Behavior Management** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of personality and social/emotional development. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of behavioral/emotional challenges and the interaction with other disabilities. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of the need for utilizing formal and informal assessment strategies in obtaining information necessary for educational and behavioral programming for individual students. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding of the rationale, components, operation and evaluation of the program models in which they are working. | | X | |
| **S1** Ability to document change in learner behavior in both academic and social areas. | | X | |
| **S2** Ability to observe and record pupil behavior utilizing different social rating systems. | | X | |
| **S3** Demonstrate the use of different methods to change and maintain behavior. | | X | |
| **S4** Ability to implement remedial techniques in academic skill areas with learners. | | X | |
| **S5** Ability to use materials designed for skill development in the social areas. | | | X |
| **S6** Ability to collaborate effectively with team members. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Academic Program Assistants**
**Specialized Competency Statements**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Academic Program Assistants** | | | |
| **K1** Knowledge of the paraprofessional's role and function in the specific academic setting. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of Minnesota Graduation Standards, including state testing and high standards as outlined in student IEPs. | | X | |
| **K3** Awareness of factors which influence cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. | | X | |
| **K4** Knowledge of educational terminology related to specific program or age level. | | X | |
| **S1** Ability to instruct students in academic subjects using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers and other professional staff. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to gather and record data about the performance and behavior of individual students. | | X | |
| **S3** Ability to confer with special and general education practitioners about individual student schedules, instructional goals, progress, and performance. | | X | |
| **S4** Ability to use developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods and reinforcement techniques. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to effectively use available instructional resources including technology, as directed by the professional. | | X | |
| **S6** Understanding of various learning styles and the ability to implement corresponding teaching methods. | | | X |
| **S7** Demonstrate the ability to implement techniques to include students in general education as outlined in IEPs. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Physical and Other Health Impairments**
**Specialized Competency Statements**

K=Knowledge S=Skill

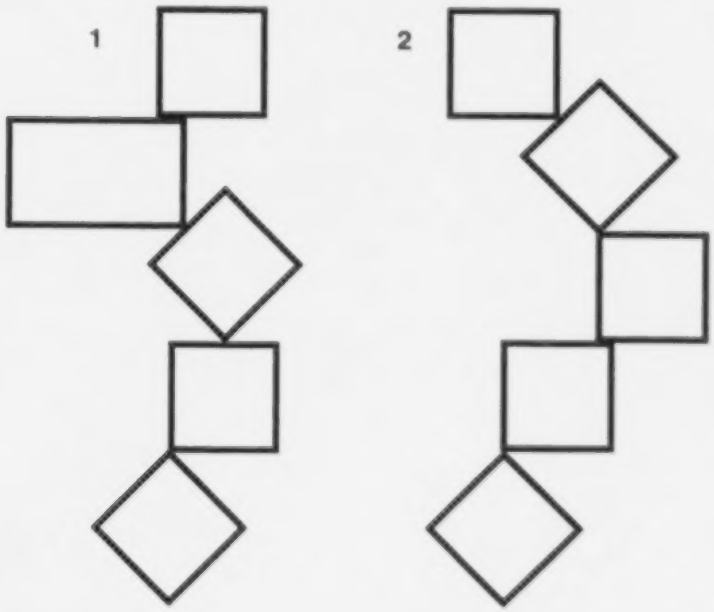
| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Physical and Other Health Impairments** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of specific student environments and learning modification/ accommodation strategies. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of medical conditions and emergency procedures for specific students, including care for seizures, latex allergies, catheterizations, tracheotomies, gastrostomies, ventilators, etc. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of proper storage, documentation; administration, and side effects of specific student medications. (NOTE: specific training is required to administer medication.) | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness of specific student transportation issues and emergency evacuation procedures. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of legal and liability issues specific to vulnerable and medically fragile students. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate competence in the use of proper body mechanics for self and specific student when transferring, lifting and positioning that student. | | X | |
| **S2** Demonstrate competence in implementation, safety, and maintenance of all necessary adaptive, assistive, and instructional technology and equipment. | | | X |
| **S3** Certification in age appropriate CPR (infant/ child, adult) and Basic First Aid, and the ability to respond appropriately during an emergency situation. | | | X |
| **S4** Ability to properly assist students with activities of daily living, including toileting, feeding, dressing, and mobility. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to implement strategies that encourage student independence and participation in all areas of development and classroom learning. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

Specialized competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

# Appendix C
# *One-Way & Two-Way Communication*

Describe diagram 1 (on the left) to the students.

- Tell them to draw the diagram following your instructions as closely as possible.
- You may tell them only once. You may not use gestures.
- Students may not ask questions, talk to one another, or look at one another's papers.




Once they've completed this task, move on to the "Two-Way Communication" exercise.

Describe diagram 2 (on the right) to the students.

- Tell them to draw the diagram following your instructions as closely as possible.
- You may repeat your directions as often as needed.
- Students then may ask questions, get clarification, and use gestures to help them understand the diagram.

Leavitt, H.J. (1974). One-way & two-way communication. In Pfeiffer, J.W. & Jones, J.E. (Eds). *A handbook of structured experiences for human relations training (volume I, revised)*, pp 17-18. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishers/Jossey Bass, Inc. Copyright © 1974. All rights reserved. For ordering information, contact Pfeiffer Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. 1-800-956-7739.

# Appendix D
# *Administering & Interpreting the ELSIE*

**Directions** (to be read aloud to students by facilitator)

This exercise is designed to identify how individuals learn most easily and most efficiently. This isn't a test and there are no right or wrong answers. In this exercise, you'll hear a total of fifty single English words. Each word is a common word with which you are likely to be familiar. As you hear each word, observe your own immediate reaction – notice what goes on inside your mind. For each word, you will probably have an activity, picture the word spelled out in your mind, hear the word and understand its meaning based on the sound, or have some physical or emotional feeling about the word, such as a tightening of a muscle or a feeling such as warmth or sorrow. This isn't a test of word association; it's not important which other word or what picture might spring to mind. The nature of your own immediate reaction to the word itself is the important data.

Check the box on your answer sheet in the appropriate letter column for your response to each word. Each word will be read only one time since the important answer is your immediate response when you first hear the word rather than what comes to you after a few seconds' thought or a second hearing.

Here's an example. You hear the word *hold*. One person might visualize the hold of a ship or see one wrestler holding another. In this case, he or she would check letter "A". Notice that is doesn't matter what the picture is, only that the word immediately brings to mind some visual image. Another person might see the word spelled out: h-o-l-d. He or she would check "B". A third person might have no visual image at all, but simply hears the word and understands its meaning from the sound alone. He or she would check "C". Finally, still another person might feel – just for an instant – his or her arm muscles tense as if holding an object or as if someone were holding him or her. In either case, he or she would check letter "D".

Let's try a few words as samples. Don't mark your sheet for these. First word: *sink* (pause).

Did you see a kitchen sink? A ship sinking in the water? A truck with its wheels sinking in the mud? If you had any such image, you

*ELSIE* used with permission from Reinert, H. (1976). One is worth a thousand words... not necessarily! *Modern Language Journal, 60*(4). This exercise is copyrighted; for permission, contact Harry Reinert, 17429 95th Place SW, Vashon, WA 98070. More information on the *ELSIE* can be found at the following Web site — *http://www.newhorizons.org/toolrm_reinert.html.*

**To the Facilitator**

The Fifty Words are found on page 105.

The Learning Style Identification Exercise answer sheet for students to complete is found on page 106.

would check A. Or did you see *sink* spelled out in your mind? If so, you would have checked B. If you saw no visual image, then you would have checked C. Did you have a momentary sinking feeling in your stomach one gets on a descending elevator? If so, you would have checked D. See how it works?

Here's another example: *meat.* This word could be either a noun – like a roast or hamburger – or a verb, as to encounter someone – *meet.* No matter which meaning struck you first, you would have checked the box for A. If you saw either word spelled out, then you would have checked B. Again, whatever meaning you attached to the word, if you did not have a visual image, you would check C. If you felt like doing something like chewing or shaking hands, then you would have checked D.

Let's try practicing one final word before beginning the exercise: *home.* Did you see a house? Then you would check A. Did you see the word spelled out? Check B. If you heard the word but didn't see or feel anything, you'd check C. If just for an instant the sound of the word gave you a warm feeling made you feel more secure, or aroused any feeling, you'd check the box for D.

### Administration

Following the introduction above and a short discussion, explain that you will read each of the fifty words (see the opposite page) once at ten second intervals.

### Scoring

The learning style profile is provided by a chart at the end of this appendix on which students can plot their raw scores. At the bottom of the answer sheet are four blanks where students can tally their total responses for each of the four categories. On the profile sheet, place a dot under each heading at the appropriate spot according to the limits presented for each band. Connecting the four dots on the chart yields a graph.

### Interpretation

The basic assumption we make in interpreting these profiles is that the further the individual varies from the mean in any one of the four categories, the stronger or weaker will be that mode of learning is for that individual, which is to say the more (or less) easily the individual is able to learn by using that approach. Scores at the extremes (either in the ±3 or ±4 band) may be considered indicative of a strongly dominant influence – positive *or* negative – of the mode.

A score falling in the +4 range, for example, tends to indicate that the person must in some way translate information received from other modes into that category before successful learning will

occur. For example, if a person has a +4 score in listening, he or she will probably sound words while reading (since this converts the words into a more readily "digestible" form), and when watching a film he or she will learn more from the dialogue than from the pictures themselves. Conversely, a –4 score in listening would indicate that when that individual attends a lecture, he or she would feel compelled to engage in some other activity in order to remember what was said e.g., taking copious notes, converting the words of the speaker into visual images, etc.

### The Fifty Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 pool | 18 foot | 35 freedom |
| 2 tall | 19 justice | 36 letter |
| 3 summer | 20 baby | 37 think |
| 4 long | 21 enemy | 38 love |
| 5 house | 22 bag | 39 running |
| 6 guilty | 23 shame | 40 ugly |
| 7 chicken | 24 street | 41 law |
| 8 strange | 25 truth | 42 angry |
| 9 liar | 26 story | 43 friend |
| 10 beautiful | 27 happy | 44 paper |
| 11 grass | 28 ground | 45 warm |
| 12 hope | 29 hate | 46 above |
| 13 yellow | 30 talk | 47 kill |
| 14 fear | 31 ocean | 48 swim |
| 15 five | 32 good | 49 hungry |
| 16 god | 33 paint | 50 bad |
| 17 read | 34 down | |

## Learning Style Identification Exercise

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____

**Instructions:**
As each word is read, check the box indicating your response according to the following code:

**A** Mental picture of some object of activity.
**B** Mental picture of words spelled out.
**C** Sound of words carries meaning.
**D** Physical or emotional feeling about words.

| | A | B | C | D | | A | B | C | D | | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | 18 | | | | | 35 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | 19 | | | | | 36 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | 20 | | | | | 37 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | 21 | | | | | 38 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | 22 | | | | | 39 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | 23 | | | | | 40 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | 24 | | | | | 41 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | 25 | | | | | 42 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | 26 | | | | | 43 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | 27 | | | | | 44 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | 28 | | | | | 45 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | 29 | | | | | 46 | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | 30 | | | | | 47 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | 31 | | | | | 48 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | 32 | | | | | 49 | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | 33 | | | | | 50 | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | 34 | | | | | | | | | |

**Total Responses:** **A** _____ **B** _____ **C** _____ **D** _____

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## Learning Style Identification Exercise – Profile Sheet

| Band | A: Visualization | B: Written Word | C: Listening | D: Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| +4 | | | | |
| | 38 | 20 | 22 | 26 |
| +3 | | | | |
| | 34 | 17 | 17 | 20 |
| +2 | | | | |
| | 29 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| +1 | | | | |
| | 19 | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| 0 | | | | |
| | 17 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| 0 | | | | |
| | 12 | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| -1 | | | | |
| | 7 | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| -2 | | | | |
| | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| -3 | | | | |
| | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| -4 | | | | |

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# References & Resources

# *References & Resources*

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# Transparencies

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design and implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

Adapted from Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

**Purpose of the Team:**

"Develop a plan that best meets the needs of individuals with disabilities with whom the team is working."

**Effective team members have:**

- An understanding of purpose.
- An understanding of roles.
- An ability to discuss effectively.
- A willingness to support team members.
- An understanding of how the team works.
- An ability to work through problems.
- An ability to use conflicts positively.
- An ability to work with other groups.
- A sense of interdependence.

# TEAM

AdMinistrator
Regular Ed Teacher
FaMily
DisaBled individual
ThErapist
ParapRofessional
Special Ed Teacher

3.2

## Three Functions of a Team

1 Task Functions

2 Maintenance Functions

3 Anti-group Functions

## How to Be an Effective Team Member

1 Job Role

2 Responsibilities

3 Goals

4 Time

5 Communication

# Individual Planning Process

| | |
|---|---|
| IEP | Individual Education Plan |
| IFSP | Individualized Family Service Plan |
| ISP | Individual Service Plan |
| ICSP | Individual Community Support Plan |
| IWRP | Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan |

3.4

# Communication Barriers

- Not communicating clearly.
- Not communicating often enough.
- Forgetting to communicate with all the parties involved.
- Not listening to each other.

5.1

# Tips for Positive Communication

- Active listeners make good communicators.
- Know, respect, and understand attitudes.
- Share common vocabulary and nonverbal cues.
- Clearly understand directions and expectations.
- Be aware of special interests and talents.
- Create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty.
- Understand silence.

5.2

# Twelve Barriers to Communication

**Judgment**

1 Criticizing

2 Name calling

3 Diagnosing

4 Praising evaluatively

**Sending Solutions**

5 Ordering

6 Threatening

7 Moralizing

8 Excessive/Inappropriate Questions

**Avoiding the Other's Concerns**

9 Advising

10 Diverting

11 Logical argument

12 Reassuring

# Problem-Solving Techniques

- Identify and describe the problem.
- Determine the cause of the problem.
- Decide on a goal – identify alternatives.
- Select and implement a course of action.
- Evaluate the results.

5.4

# ELSIE Discussion Questions

1 How does it affect your work with students or clients?

2 Do you tend to push your way of doing things on others or do you totally accept others' styles?

3 Do you have conflicts with others at times about how to do something because you feel your way is right when, actually, it might be a conflict between your learning style and someone else's?

4 Notice how others do things. What do you think their learning style is?

5 Do you and your supervisor do things in the same way? Do you think you have the same style or different ones?

6 Do you sometimes have conflicts with your family members over how to do something because you feel you know the "right" way to do something?

# Job Factors Leading to Stress

- Built-up resentments which explode.
- Resentments taken out on innocent persons who aren't involved in the conflict.
- Gossiping and back-stabbing.
- Creating a poisoned work environment.
- Illnesses.
- A sense of powerlessness in your job.
- Rigid and inflexible institutional practices.
- Poor personal time management skills.
- Boredom, lack of challenge.
- Poor quality relationships.
- Overload on the job.
- Home or family stress.

7.1

# Stress...

...the body's physical or psychological response to any demand (stressor) put upon it.

*Eustress – good*
*Distress – bad*

7.2

# General Adaptation Syndrome

(Body's Reactions to Stress)

- **Stage 1 – Alarm**

  Recognize stressor – prepare for fight or flight.

- **Stage 2 – Resistance**

  Body repairs damage is stressor is gone or cannot repair if stressor remains.

- **Stage 3 – Exhaustion**

  Body develops stress diseases – headaches, head problems, metal illness: may lead to death.

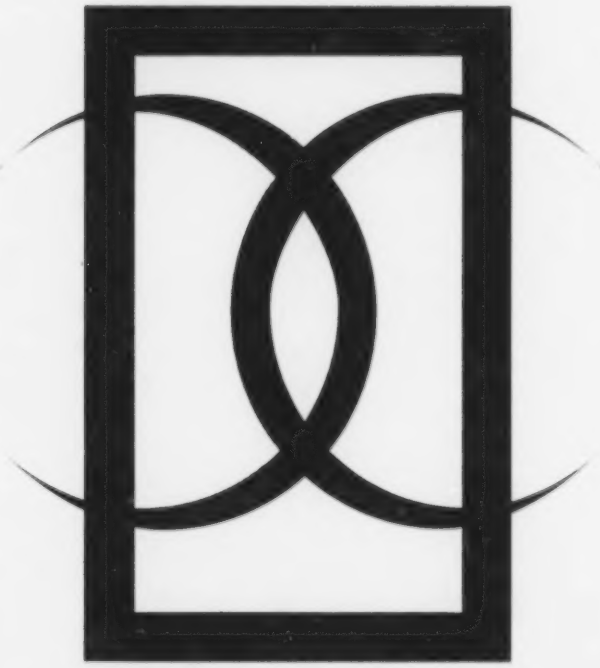
7.3

# Stress Management Techniques

- Work off stress physically
- Talk out your worries
- Accept what you can't change
- Avoid self-medication
- Get enough sleep and rest
- Know what causes you stress
- Examine your life style
- Set realistic goals
- Simplify your life
- Exercise routinely
- Eat properly
- Start the day "right"
- Do difficult tasks first
- Realize that you have choices
- Practice relaxation
- Take up a hobby
- Surround yourself with friends

7.4

*Strategies for Paraprofessionals Who Support Individuals with Disabilities*



# The Paraprofessional
# An Introduction

## Student Edition

*Institute on Community Integration (UAP)*

The College of Education & Human Development

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The paraprofessional training module *The Paraprofessional: An Introduction* was prepared at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

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*Institute on Community Integration Project Staff*
Teri Wallace, Project Director
Richard Weatherman, Project Director

*Hutchinson Technical College Project Staff*
Carol Adams, Training Specialist
Joyce Evenski, Instructor
Veronica Hansen, Instructor
Susan Rosenzweig, Instructor
Andi Upin, Instructor

Compiled by Jean E. Ness.
Edited by Nancy Krawetz.

*To request additional copies and alternative formats, contact —*
Publications Office
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612/624-4512

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# Introduction

# *An Introduction to the Curriculum*

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

By employing paraprofessionals, educational and other services for persons with disabilities are able to expand and improve the quality of assistance they provide. Some of the benefits paraprofessionals offer schools, agencies, and individuals with disabilities are the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- More individualized instruction.
- Increased planning time for educators, supervisors, and others.
- Better monitoring and evaluation of persons with disabilities.
- Greater consistency in services.
- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

## The Role of Today's Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

A paraprofessional is an employee:

- Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to individuals and/or their parents.
- Who works under the supervision of a professional staff member who is responsible for the overall management of the program area including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and the individual's progress.

Paraprofessionals provide services in the following areas:

- Educational programs
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Recreation programs
- Early intervention and preschool programs
- Social work/case management
- Parent training/child-find programs
- Vocational training programs and job coaching
- Community programs
- Transition and school-to-work

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification required for the job, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required.

Because the support of paraprofessionals is so essential to the success of individuals with disabilities, this module is dedicated to improving and enhancing skills for paraprofessionals.

Information in *The Role of Today's Paraprofessional* adapted from: Pickett, A.L. (1997). Paraeducators in school settings: Framing the issues. In Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K. (Eds.) *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach* (page 4). Austin, TX: PRO-ED. Copyright 1997 by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted and reprinted by permission.

## About the Module

Whether you have years of experience working with persons who have disabilities or are just beginning, there are probably many questions you have about the role of a paraprofessional. Some concerns and questions will be very specific to your work setting, while others will be more general. This module will cover both.

This curriculum is primarily for paraprofessionals who are (or will be) working in educational settings (i.e., special and general education). It will, however, also be useful for those in direct service settings, such as vocational programs and residential settings.

The training you are about to begin will not only address the current reality for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities, but more importantly, the challenges for the future in your career as a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals aren't expected to have a total understanding of all the concepts in these modules, but the paraprofessional who has a working knowledge of these core concepts will be most effective.

## Philosophy and Key Beliefs

This module was developed using a general philosophy including six key beliefs for paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities. Those beliefs include:

- The individual with a disability is the ultimate locus of control and is the most important member in the decision-making process.
- The family is the other primary locus of control. Family involvement is essential in any decision-making process.
- The team concept is essential in setting up a plan with an individual. This team includes the individual, the family, and all those working with the individual, including the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional is an essential link between what is and what can be for the individual. The best follow-through on any plan comes from teamwork.
- The community should be the basis for all training, as much as possible. This means that, whether offering real-life examples in the classroom or working in real life situations in the community, the focus must be on the most natural setting and support possible. This is essential so the i. dividual can make connections between what is being learned on a daily basis and the real world. This will help the individual generalize the experience to similar situations in his or her life.
- Inclusion is the goal. This means that individuals with disabilities should be included in the mainstream of society – work, school, and recreation. Devotion to such a model will create the most positive results for the individuals and society as a whole. Inclusion suggests that we can and will all benefit by learning to work and live side by side with each other.
- The most effective paraprofessional will be the individual who has a good self-esteem and is able to be assertive. The assertive paraprofessional is able to ask for support and guidance from staff.

## Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

The Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium has recently developed and published some important information related to paraprofessionals, including new legislation, guiding principles, and core and specialized competencies. This information can be found in Appendix B at the back of this module. While some of the information is specific to Minnesota, much of it is applicable to paraprofessionals across the country.

## After the Training

You will leave this training with more information about paraprofessionals than you had when you started. It's important to remember that no matter how much knowledge you have about your job, the individuals you work with are your greatest trainers. Each one is unique and has his or her own interests and needs. The greatest responsibility you have is to listen to those interests and needs, remember what you have learned, ask what is needed, and use that information in your working relationship and responsibilities.

Therefore, use this training as a basis and build your skills from this point, drawing upon each setting and individual. Whether consumer, student, teacher, supervisor, principal, director, or superintendent, you will learn from each. With each setting and situation, your confidence, ability, and skills will continue to grow. Remember, this training is only as good as the degree to which you use what you learn; seek assistance so you can "do what you know."

# 1

## *Chapter One*

# Job Roles & Descriptions


1 Introduction

1 Section 1: Today's Paraprofessional

2 Section 2: Roles & Responsibilities

14 Section 3: Characteristics of Successful Paraprofessionals

17 Summary

17 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

The need for paraprofessionals to work with persons who have disabilities has been growing in recent years. Increasing numbers of persons with a range of disabilities are now living in small residential settings in our communities, attending regular classes in neighborhood schools, holding jobs in local businesses, and participating in community recreation and social activities. There is a great need for paraprofessionals to provide the services and supports these individuals need for community living.

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- Improved parent-school relationships.
- Greater involvement of persons with disabilities in education and other settings in the community at large.
- Increased transportation assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Expanded vocational skill development for individuals with disabilities.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with the paraprofessional position in school, work, and community settings.
- Identify and understand many of the roles and responsibilities associated with supervisors of paraprofessionals in schools or direct service and community environments.

## Section 1
## *Today's Paraprofessional*

Paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities have a variety of roles and definitions, depending on the environment in which they work. For example, one definition of educational paraprofessionals includes the following:

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# Section 2
# *Roles & Responsibilities*

Look at the following charts describing the differences in professional and paraprofessional roles. Notice that in each case, the professional initiates the plan while the paraprofessional assists in implementing it.

If you are (or will be) in a direct service setting, adapt this model to make a chart of your duties.

## Chart A: The Teacher/Adult Supervisor's Roles

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Plans weekly schedule.<br>• Plans lessons/activities for entire group and modifies for individual needs.<br>• Sets and/or maintains records where all team members have access and input.<br>• Communicates all decisions, plans, policies, and instructions.<br>• Communicates needs/situations of individuals which affect their safety and welfare. |
| **Assessments** | • Assesses individuals.<br>• Administers tests. |
| **Objectives** | • Determines appropriate objectives. |
| **Instruction** | • Gives instruction for the entire group, small groups and individuals. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Plans behavior management strategies for groups and individuals. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Meets with parents.<br>• Initiates conferences concerning planning and review. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Develops and implements individual plan.<br>• Communicates with all team members. |

## Chart B: The Paraprofessional's Roles

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Implements plan under direct supervision of teacher or supervisor. |
| **Assessments** | • Assists with monitoring or scoring. |
| **Objectives** | • Implements lessons to meet objectives. |
| **Instruction** | • Teaches small group and individual sessions. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Implements behavioral strategies using the same emphasis and techniques as the teacher or supervisor. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Communicates with parents in coordination with teacher/supervisor. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Carries out individualized plans. |

## Chart C: The Paraprofessional's Role in Daily Practice

| | |
|---|---|
| **Setting Organization** | • Paraprofessionals make daily accommodations and modifications for individuals getting approval from supervisor.<br>• Paraprofessionals may keep daily progress records.<br>• Paraprofessionals talk through decisions, plans, and strategies with teacher/supervisor.<br>• Paraprofessionals communicate daily and regular needs of individuals. |
| **Assessments** | • Paraprofessionals may do daily monitoring and report results and observations. |
| **Objectives** | • Paraprofessionals help determine objectives and updates status of the objectives based on daily contacts. |
| **Instruction** | • Paraprofessionals may provide direct instruction and report results. |
| **Behavioral Management** | • Paraprofessionals help determine appropriate strategies based on daily contact with individuals.<br>• The team modifies students' environments as needed based on daily contact. |
| **Working with Parents** | • Paraprofessionals may communicate regularly with parent about transportation (bus aide, etc.) and report information back to teacher/supervisor. |
| **Individualized Planning** | • Paraprofessionals may participate actively on students' teams, communicating daily activities, changes, and needs of the individual. |

## What is My Role as a Paraprofessional?

One of the first opportunities to use your assertive skills is in finding out just exactly what your job role and functions are. Here are some questions to ask to find out about your role:

1 What are my regular/special duties for the day?

2 What is my daily routine or schedule to be?

3 What records am I responsible for keeping?

4 What resources are available to me for extra support?

5 What are the emergency procedures?

6 What is the schedule or routine for the individuals with whom I will be working?

7 What are the most significant safety regulations I must know?

8 Where are supplies kept and who has access to them?

9 What equipment is available and how do I gain access to it?

10 What line of communication and authority should I follow?

11 Do I have more than one person supervising me and giving me direction? How is my time divided? Who is my supervisor?

12 What client/student records are available to me?

13 What student/client information must I keep confidential?

14 What student/client information can I share and with whom?

15 What should I do if a student/client tells me he or she has been abused or if I suspect abuse has occurred?

16 To whom should I bring questions concerning policy issues?

17 If I have interpersonal problems on the job, to whom should I go?

18 What kind of communication and relationships should I have with clients'/students' parents?

19 What is expected of me in terms of discipline?

20 How do those on staff view the role of paraprofessional?

## Daily Schedule

**Directions:** Use this form to analyze your current schedule. If you aren't currently in a paraprofessional position, develop a schedule you think would be realistic. Record the time required for each activity, then describe the paraprofessional's and the teacher's/supervisor's role in the appropriate space.

| A.M. Time | Paraprofessional Activity | Teacher Activity |
|---|---|---|
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |

| P.M. Time | Paraprofessional Activity | Teacher Activity |
|---|---|---|
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |
| to | | |

*Daily Schedule* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## *Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory*

**Directions:** Paraprofessionals should fill out this inventory to describe their current job responsibilities. For each of the responsibilities below, check the box that most closely reflects your role.

| I'll do this now. | I'll try with support. | I can't do this. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Instructional Support** |
| | | | Observe and record student progress. |
| | | | Help students practice math to reinforce lessons. |
| | | | Help students with assignments. |
| | | | Help with listening activities. |
| | | | Modify written materials to meet student needs. |
| | | | Read to students. |
| | | | Tape record lessons and assignments. |
| | | | Help students work on projects assigned in regular classroom. |
| | | | Assist students with self-help skills (grooming, etc.). |
| | | | Help plan daily activities for students. |
| | | | Assist in developing behavioral objectives. |
| | | | Assist in testing students. |
| | | | Talk with students about careers. |
| | | | Accompany students to community training sites. |
| | | | Assist students in learning transportation skills. |
| | | | Support students in learning job skills. |
| | | | Help non-English speaking students with vocabulary. |
| | | | Attend IEP Meetings. |
| | | | **Resource Support** |
| | | | Help find materials needed for teaching. |
| | | | Help develop learning centers. |
| | | | Help manage learning centers. |
| | | | Prepare classroom displays. |
| | | | Make bulletin board displays. |
| | | | Make instructional games. |
| | | | Help order materials and supplies. |
| | | | Organize supplies in classroom. |
| | | | Put lessons on chalkboard. |
| | | | Operate tape recorders, videotape players, etc. |
| | | | Set up and run filmstrips, films, and overhead. |
| | | | Make visual aids (transparencies, posters, etc.) |
| | | | Schedule guest speakers. |



*Continued*

### Classroom Organizational Support

Supervise students on arrival or departure.
Supervise students during lunch.
Supervise students during recess.
Supervise students loading buses.
Work with general education teachers to help include students.
Escort students to bathroom, library, etc.
Accompany students to physical therapy, etc.
Help contact parents (send notes, progress reports).
Get materials ready for activities (mix clay, etc.).
Help prepare and clean up snacks and lunch.
Help students clean up after activities.
Distribute supplies and books to students.
Collect completed work.
Assist students with health needs.
Prepare and arrange room for the teacher.

### Behavior Management Support

Supervise time-out.
Observe and chart student behavior.
Give positive reinforcement and support.
Manage conflicts between students.
Provide close supervision for students with challenging behaviors.
Circulate in classroom to provide support.
Make sure class and school rules are followed.
Assist students who are self-managing behavior.
Help students develop organizational skills.

### Clerical Support

Take attendance.
Type reports, tests, seat work.
Operate copier, fax, etc.
Sort and file student papers.
Record grades.
Collect fees, i.e. book, milk, activity, etc.
Correct assigned student lessons.
Grade and record objective tests.
Help with paperwork to facilitate parent-teacher appointments. Inventory materials/fill out forms.
Arrange field trips.

*Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Teacher Needs Preference Inventory

**Directions:** Teachers/supervisors should fill out this inventory to describe their current job responsibilities. For each of the responsibilities below, check the box that most closely reflects your role.

| | I need this done. | I'll help with this. | I'll do this. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Instructional Support** | | | |
| Observe and record student progress. | | | |
| Help students practice math to reinforce lessons. | | | |
| Help students with assignments. | | | |
| Help with listening activities. | | | |
| Modify written materials to meet student needs. | | | |
| Read to students. | | | |
| Tape record lessons and assignments. | | | |
| Help students work on projects assigned in regular classroom. | | | |
| Assist students with self-help skills (grooming, etc.). | | | |
| Help plan daily activities for students. | | | |
| Assist in developing behavioral objectives. | | | |
| Assist in testing students. | | | |
| Talk with students about careers. | | | |
| Accompany students to community training sites. | | | |
| Assist students in learning transportation skills. | | | |
| Support students in learning job skills. | | | |
| Help non-English speaking students with vocabulary. | | | |
| Attend IEP Meetings. | | | |
| **Resource Support** | | | |
| Help find materials needed for teaching. | | | |
| Help develop learning centers. | | | |
| Help manage learning centers. | | | |
| Prepare classroom displays. | | | |
| Make bulletin board displays. | | | |
| Make instructional games. | | | |
| Help order materials and supplies. | | | |
| Organize supplies in classroom. | | | |
| Put lessons on chalkboard. | | | |
| Operate tape recorders, videotape players, etc. | | | |
| Set up and run filmstrips, films, and overhead. | | | |
| Make visual aids (transparencies, posters, etc.) | | | |
| Schedule guest speakers. | | | |

*Continued*

**Classroom Organizational Support**

Supervise students on arrival or departure.
Supervise students during lunch.
Supervise students during recess.
Supervise students loading buses.
Work with general education teachers to help include students.
Escort students to bathroom, library, etc.
Accompany students to physical therapy, etc.
Help contact parents (send notes, progress reports).
Get materials ready for activities (mix clay, etc.).
Help prepare and clean up snacks and lunch.
Help students clean up after activities.
Distribute supplies and books to students.
Collect completed work.
Assist students with health needs.
Prepare and arrange room for the teacher.

**Behavior Management Support**

Supervise time-out.
Observe and chart student behavior.
Give positive reinforcement and support.
Manage conflicts between students.
Provide close supervision for students with challenging behaviors.
Circulate in classroom to provide support.
Make sure class and school rules are followed.
Assist students who are self-managing behavior.
Help students develop organizational skills.

**Clerical Support**

Take attendance.
Type reports, tests, seat work.
Operate copier, fax, etc.
Sort and file student papers.
Record grades.
Collect fees, i.e. book, milk, activity, etc.
Correct assigned student lessons.
Grade and record objective tests.
Help with paperwork to facilitate parent-teacher appointments. Inventory materials/fill out forms.
Arrange field trips.

*Teacher Needs Preference Inventory* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Job Description for the Paraprofessional

**Directions:** Based on the results of the *Paraprofessional Skills Preference Inventory* and the *Teacher Needs Preference Inventory*, write a job description that you feel would be appropriate for a paraprofessional or for you.

### 1 Instructional Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

### 2 Resource Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

### 3 Classroom Organization Duties

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

**4 Behavior Management Duties**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

**5 Clerical Duties**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

*Job Description for the Paraprofessional* adapted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991). *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Section 3
# *Characteristics of Successful Paraprofessionals*

There are many characteristics that are seen by directors of special education, superintendents, facilitators, supervisors, and paraprofessionals themselves as important for being successful as a paraprofessional. Some of those characteristics are:

- Adaptability
- Dependability
- Cooperativeness
- Tolerance
- Resourcefulness
- Versatility
- Intelligence
- Experience with children
- Energy
- Creativity

If an individual with a disability, a family, or a school or agency staff member could have their "dream list" of expectations of a paraprofessional, these are at least some of the desired behaviors (look at these as goals for yourself):

- Has a positive attitude toward the organization/school and the personnel.
- Enjoys the students/clients.
- Respects the students/clients.
- Is sensitive to the needs of students/clients.
- Is dependable, prompt, and reliable (doesn't miss work often).
- Is discreet about confidential information.
- Is able to share perceptions of individuals with teachers or supervisors.
- Is able to give assistance without being asked.
- Uses common sense.
- Is a liaison between the work setting and the community by interpreting community values and concerns in the setting and the concerns in the community at large.
- Is eager to participate in training to further skills as a paraprofessional.
- Believes in the team concept of cooperative work.

- Is eager to involve the individual in the community.
- Is assertive in team and work situations.
- Is able to identify the needs of the individual and express them to the appropriate person.
- Is an advocate in behalf of individuals with disabilities.

It would be perfect to have a staff that all shared the above traits. It would also be ideal to start a job with a clear and concise job description. The reality is often quite different from this. In many cases, the paraprofessional starts the job with only a vague understanding of the rules, regulations, and the tasks he or she is responsible for, and even less understanding of the unique needs of the client/student population in the setting. Even in the best of settings, you cannot be expected to know everything.

## Personal Goal-Setting Activity

One important way to apply what you learn in this class is to relate your needs and wants to personal long-term or short-term goals.

A short-term goal might be for you to complete this class. A long-term goal might be for you to complete a four-year college degree. Think of a goal (either long-term or short-term, either personal or professional) and how you plan to accomplish it:

- What is your goal?

- In what ways could you pursue this goal?

- What would be the ideal outcome of meeting this goal?

- What could prevent you from reaching this goal?

- What are your rights in this situation?

- What are the rights of others?

- Now make an action plan to achieve your goals:
  *The steps I will take to achieve this goal:*

## *Summary*

Paraprofessionals are typically different from professionals in the amount of education, certification, degree of responsibility, and extent of supervision required for the job. Responsibilities of paraprofessionals vary greatly depending on the individuals with whom they work, and the setting in which their job takes place. More and more, paraprofessionals can be seen working alongside individuals with disabilities in education and community-based settings.

## *Questions to Ponder*

- Are the responsibilities of your current job in line with those outlined in the charts on pages 3 and 4?
- How would you go about redefining your job with your supervisor if you felt you were doing more "supervisory" tasks than appropriate based on your training and education?

# 2

*Chapter Two*

# Description of the Work Environment


19 Introduction

19 Section 1: Working with School Staff

21 Section 2: Working with Residential or Vocational Staff

23 Section 3: Where Paraprofessionals Fit into the System

24 Section 4: Community Agencies That Support Individuals with Disabilities

25 Summary

25 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

Along with understanding your role and job description, it is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of others on staff. This is essential for effective teamwork. It is also very useful in helping you understand how you fit into the entire "scheme" of the organization.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and understand roles of key staff in a school, vocational, or residential setting.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the hierarchical and organizational structure of school, vocational, or residential environments.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the purposes of major community-based organizations and agencies that provide support to individuals with disabilities.

## Section 1
## *Working with School Staff*

If you're in an educational setting, you may work directly or come in contact with some of the following professionals:

**General Education Teacher**

The role of the general education teacher is largely teaching the regular lessons. You may be responsible with general educators on adapting and explaining curriculum and assigning work for students to accomplish either as part of the class or separately based on individual needs.

**Special Education Teacher**

Special education teachers have the background and training to set up specific plans to meet students' educational needs. She or he may be the paraprofessional's immediate supervisor and may determine the daily/weekly responsibilities the paraprofessional will perform with students.

**Adaptive Physical Education Teacher**

Some schools have a physical education teacher who designs exercise and activities to meet the needs of individual students. This may be common with students with physical disabilities.

**Occupational Therapist & Physical Therapist**

Students with disabilities may spend time individually with an

occupational or physical therapist. The role of this specialist is to collaborate with staff to design therapeutic procedures that will help students become more independent physically.

- **Physical therapists** work with ambulation (walking), modalities (senses), and cardiorespiratory functioning.
- **Occupational therapists** work with fine motor and perceptual skills, sensory integration, cognitive and psychosocial aspects of performance, and adaptive devices related to daily activities.

### School Social Worker/Case Manager

The school social worker is often the person on staff who has family information and an understanding of the blend of needs between the school and home. The social worker is an excellent resource for background information on the student's family life. Not all schools have social workers on staff.

### Licensed School Nurse

The licensed school nurse is responsible for dispensing medications and assisting in meeting a student's medical needs.

### Psychologist

The psychologist may be involved in team planning for the individual on a behavior plan, or other specific needs relating to behavior or psychological testing. Psychologists are licensed to test students to determine their level of intellectual functioning. They may also offer counseling and support to students with emotional or behavioral difficulties.

### Building Principal

The principal is the head administrator of a school and sets policy for staff and rules for students. This is the person the paraprofessional would ultimately address building/policy concerns to. The principal supervises all school staff.

### Lead Teacher/Department Head

The lead teacher is responsible for coordinating the activities of other teachers in the same subject area. She or he may set schedules, determine who teaches what, and schedule a paraprofessional's time with various teachers and/or students. This is the person responsible for setting policy in a program area, determining assignments for teachers, and often, determining program need or individual need for paraprofessionals. Not all schools have lead teachers.

### Superintendent

The superintendent is responsible for all policy and programming throughout an entire school district. She or he is ultimately responsible to the school board.

### Vocational Education Teacher

The vocational education teacher is the individual who is qualified to teach a vocationally specific set of information.

## Section 2
## *Working with Residential or Vocational Staff*

If you are employed in a direct service setting, the following are some of the people with whom you may work:

### Occupational Therapist & Physical Therapist

The individual with disabilities may spend time individually with an occupational or physical therapist. The role of this specialist is to collaborate with staff to develop ways to integrate the individual into "normal" settings as much as possible, do proper positioning and handling procedures, and use adaptive equipment.

- **Physical therapists** usually have additional skill in the use of ambulation, modalities, and cardiorespiratory functioning.
- **Occupational therapists** also have skills in developing activities in fine motor and perceptual skills, sensory integration, cognitive and psychosocial aspects of performance, as well as use of adaptive devices related to daily activities.

### Psychologist

The psychologist conducts assessments to determine disability, which will enable the individual to access services. A psychologist also may be used as a consultant for the development of a behavior support program for an individual. Sometimes the psychologist will become involved in various forms of adult, family, or individual counseling.

### Behavior Analyst

A behavior analyst may design strategies to help individuals maintain socially acceptable behavior in a variety of community settings.

### Qualified Mental Retardation Professional

The term *Qualified Mental Retardation Professional* (QMRP) comes from the federal regulations that govern the running of group homes and intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation. The name QMRP has been adopted and used by states and industry. In residential and vocational settings, the

QMRP is equivalent to the teacher in an educational setting. The QMRP leads a team in assisting individuals in setting goals and developing objectives to meet these goals at work, home, and in the community.

**Job Coach**

A job coach provides support to individuals with disabilities at the work site. The level and degree of support varies depending on the individual and may fade out over time. Paraprofessionals often hold job coach positions.

**Program Director**

A program director may be parallel to the Director of Special Education or principal in an educational setting. The director supervises the QMRP/supervisor, secures new services, hires and fires staff, and is in charge of personnel, policies, and procedures.

**Medical Professionals**

Nurses or nursing consultants (RN or LPN) may be on staff to monitor health concerns and medications. Nurses usually make referrals to doctors. Paraprofessionals must be certified by an approved Department of Health program to pass out medications.

**Social Worker/County Case Manager**

Many individuals with disabilities require the services of a social worker. This person serves as a resource to family and staff. They can help get the services an individual needs to meet his or her goals.

**Administrator/Executive Director**

An administrator in a residential or vocational setting is equivalent to the superintendent in a school setting. She or he sets policy and makes program decisions and is ultimately responsible to the board.

**House/Program Coordinator**

A house/program coordinator may be similar to the Department Head in an educational setting. She or he makes decisions about programming and individual work assignments and coordinates the operation of the program.

## Section 3
# *Where Paraprofessionals Fit into the System*

School districts and vocational or residential settings are (or should be) organized in such a way that everyone's responsibilities are clear, the level of authority of each position is clear, and the path of accountability is clear. The two charts in this section are typical organizational charts of schools and residential or vocational settings. Notice where the paraprofessional fits into each model and from whom the paraprofessional receives direction.

### A Typical School System

Local School Board
↓
Superintendent
↓
Department Heads:
Curriculum & Instruction  Elementary Education
Vocational Education  Special Education
Human Resources/Personnel
↓
Building Principal
↓
Lead Teacher
↓
General, Special, or Vocational Education Teacher
↓
Paraprofessional

### A Typical Residential/Vocational Setting

Administrator, Executive Director, President, etc.
↓
Program Director, Vice President, Program Manager
↓
QMRR, Quality Mental Retardation Professional
↓
House/Program Coordinator, Unit Coordinator
House/Program Supervisor
↓
Paraprofessional/Direct Service Staff

# Section 4
# *Community Agencies That Support Individuals with Disabilities*

Many agencies, organizations, and services play a vital role in supporting people with disabilities in school and vocational/residential settings. Several are briefly described in this section.

**Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is part of the Department of Economic Security. It is responsible for the delivery of a full range of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible clients. Services include vocational counseling, guidance, vocational evaluation and diagnosis, medical evaluation, vocational training, job placement, and follow up. Clients aren't charged for basic services such as counseling, guidance, and job placement.

**Department of Health**

The Minnesota Department of Health is the state's official health agency. It is responsible for maintaining and improving the health of Minnesota citizens. It surveys settings and enforces health-related regulations, such as regulations related to food preparation in residential/vocational and school settings.

**Department of Education**

The Minnesota Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the state provides a uniform quality education to all students. Under the Department is the State Board of Education, which sets statewide policies and regulations for all public schools. It is made up of a board with nine members whose job it is to implement board policies. The state board meets on a monthly basis for two days. These meeting are open to the public.

**Department of Human Services**

The Minnesota Department of Human Services determines how and when the state will implement federal services. It also determines state regulations for federal services. The Welfare Department and the County Social Service Department are in the Department of Social Services. These agencies are responsible for services to persons with disabilities and have the authority to determine, refer to, and secure services for people with disabilities.

**Community Mental Health Centers**

These centers offer counseling, crisis intervention, and often help determine whether a person will need inpatient or outpatient psychiatric care.

**Parent/Consumer Advocacy Groups**

These groups offer services to individuals with disabilities and their families. They help in securing the best services, placement, and support based on individual needs. They also are active in working to change attitudes about persons with disabilities. Examples of such organizations are PACER, People First, ACT (Advocating Change Together), and Arc.

**Non-Government Organizations**

These are not-for-profit organizations that financially support agencies and groups such as advocacy groups and residential settings. Examples of such organizations are the United Way and the Red Cross.

# *Summary*

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of those with whom you work will help you to establish your role within that organizational structure. Whether you are working in a school, residential, or vocational setting, it is important to find out who the key players are and what your job is in relation to those individuals. If the organizational structure of your workplace is unclear to you, ask your supervisor or a coworker to explain it to you and/or give you an organizational chart to review. Ask where you (the paraprofessional) fits into the structure.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- What is the hierarchical structure at your workplace? Does the written "organizational chart" accurately reflect what is really going on?
- How would you access a community agency representative on behalf of one of your students?
- Does your current workplace collaborate with community-based agencies and organizations? In what ways?

# 3

## *Chapter Three*

# Teamwork


27 Introduction

27 Section 1: What is Teamwork?

28 Section 2: Who Should Be on the Team?

29 Section 3: Functions of a Team

31 Section 4: Essential Elements of Effective Teams

33 Section 5: What Paraprofessionals Need to Know to be Effective Team Members

34 Section 6: The Individualized Planning Process

37 Summary

37 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

The skills and attitudes that any new employee needs on any job vary greatly, but one set of skills that is important on every job is the ability to work in teams. This is extremely important for paraprofessionals because a paraprofessional will typically work in collaboration with the many professionals who are supporting a student or client. The more effectively the team can work together, the better they can provide programming and services for individuals and their families.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe characteristics of effective teams and team members.
- Understand and describe the roles of team members who most commonly work with individuals with disabilities in a school, residential, or work setting.
- Identify and describe the task, maintenance, and anti-group functions of a team.
- Recognize and understand plans used when developing individualized services for individuals with disabilities.

## Section 1
## *What is Teamwork?*

### The Purpose of a Team

What is the purpose of a team? For our purposes, a team works together to develop a plan that best meets the needs of individuals with disabilities with whom the team is working. The team may work together to develop initial planning with an individual and their family and/or work together to solve problems as they arise.

A team is a group of people who work together to meet goals. This may consist of working on a plan to provide services or working with individuals and their families to set goals and define strategies to meet those goals.

### Characteristics of Effective Teams

In order for a team to be effective, team members must have:

- An understanding of each person's role on the team.
- An understanding of the purpose of the team.
- An ability to talk to each other about issues that affect the efficiency of the team.


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- A willingness to support each other in the team.
- An understanding of how the team works.
- An ability to effectively work through both interpersonal and task-oriented challenges.
- An understanding that more collaboration means less competition to provide the best services for the individual.
- An ability to use conflict positively rather than destructively.
- An ability to work with other groups to assist the individual.
- A sense of interdependence among team members.

## Section 2
## *Who Should Be on the Team?*

Role definition is essential to any successful team effort. With an integrated team made up of professionals, paraprofessionals, parents, and consumers, it's important to make everyone's role clear. Whether you will be working in a direct service setting or an educational setting, your role on the team needs to be made clear to you. That is the responsibility of your supervisor.

As a guideline to typical roles that team members have, refer to the following overview of team roles adapted from a presentation at the 1987 Arc-Minnesota Conference.

### Roles of Essential Team Members

**Individual with a Disability**

- Presents personal values and priorities.
- Advocates for personal accommodations and modifications.
- Provides insight into personal goals and future planning.

**Parent/Family Member**

- Presents family values and priorities for the individual.
- Provides insight into the individual's interests, preferences, skills, and needed supports.
- Provides a vision of the individual's future.

**General Education Teacher**

- Sees and includes the individual as a member of the class rather than as a visitor.
- Seeks and uses others to adapt learning activities to include the individual in meaningful ways.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Special Education Teacher**

- Provides consultation and collaboration.
- Adapts curriculum, materials, and equipment.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Paraprofessional**

- Facilitates the individual's direct participation with peers/adults.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Therapist (Physical, Occupational, Speech & Language)**

- Insures functional approaches to addressing therapy needs in typical activities and interactions such as self care, getting on the bus, finding the bathroom.
- Adapts the curriculum, materials, and equipment.
- Incorporates IEP goals in typical activities and interactions.

**Administrator**

- Draws together general and special education resources.
- Insures staff training and team consultative support.
- Assists in problem solving logistics and program issues.

*Roles of Essential Team Members* adapted with permission from Kjerland, L., Neiss, J., Franke, B., Verdon, C. & Westman, E. (1987). *Roles of essential team members.* Paper presented at the ARC Minnesota Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

# Section 3
# *Functions of a Team*

A team has three functions – task functions, maintenance functions, and anti-group functions – which are described below.

## Task Functions

Task functions are the specific activities a team comes together to accomplish. For example, a student's team may meet to develop a plan for the year and document that plan on an IEP. Skills needed to successfully accomplish these tasks include:

- **Initiating:** Discussing what could be done or how challenges experienced by the client/student could be approached. This is when ideas are collected, suggestions are made, and procedures are reviewed for possible solutions.
- **Regulating:** Regulating the direction by summarizing what's been done, by stating time limitations, or by restating the goals.

- **Information Seeking:** Seeking clarification on suggestions.
- **Information Giving:** Offering facts or generalizations related to experiences pertinent to the situation being discussed.
- **Opinion Giving:** Stating beliefs or opinions about the decision the group should choose.
- **Elaborating:** Giving examples or developing further understanding by offering rationale for suggestions made.
- **Coordinating:** Clarifying suggestions made for the student/client and trying to decide on which are the most appropriate.
- **Orienting:** Summarizing what has happened, pointing out problems, and raising questions about whether more information from the outside is needed or if decisions can be made.
- **Evaluating:** Helping the group to evaluate decisions, goals, and procedures, and checking to see if the group is in agreement or deciding what further steps need to be taken before a consensus can be reached.

## Maintenance Functions

These functions focus on the personal relationships among members in the group. These functions help a group maintain itself so the focus of the team can be on the tasks and the service to the client/student, rather than on any interpersonal conflicts within the group. These ideas can be used by the team leader or any team member to work toward building the relationships on the team. This sort of supportive action leads to groups who work much more collaboratively together.

- **Supporting:** Creating an emotional climate that holds the group together and helps each member to want to contribute. Ways this is done include: agreeing with others' suggestions, offering positive feedback for another's suggestions, or adding your own additional thoughts or ideas to someone else's suggestions.
- **Harmonizing:** Mediating differences between team members or relieving tension with a joke/story about a similar situation.
- **Gatekeeping:** Noticing certain team members who have not spoken and asking them their opinions or asking them to relate something that fits into the conversation. This helps members who may feel isolated to come back into the conversation.
- **Encouraging:** Praising and accepting others' ideas. This creates a warmth and a friendly feeling of belonging and helps others become more responsive.
- **Compromising:** Admitting when you're wrong, or modifying your ideas when you hear other input that makes you realize collaborating creates a stronger decision or choice.

### Anti-Group Functions

These functions focus on members' individual needs and behaviors but don't help the team work as a unit. In these functions, the group goals are forgotten and the individual acts primarily to satisfy personal needs. These are behaviors that, while unavoidable at times, a group works to prevent by implementing the maintenance functions described previously.

- **Blocking:** Being negative and unreasonably resistant; trying to bring back issues the group has already rejected.
- **Self-Confessing:** Using the group to express personal problems and gain sympathy.
- **Recognition-Seeking:** Calling attention to oneself and describing personal achievements and boasting.
- **Dominating:** Attempting to take over by interrupting others, flattering, asserting superior status, asserting authority, or manipulating the group or individuals in the group.
- **Being Cynical:** Bringing up unrelated subjects, being cynical about what team meetings like this accomplish or displaying lack of involvement.
- **Special Interest Pleading:** Stereotyping what is best for others or the group when one is really hiding one's own biases or prejudices in the stereotype used.
- **Aggressing:** Questioning the competence of the people giving their opinions, joking aggressively, showing envy by trying to take credit for another's ideas, expressing disapproval of values, acting on feelings of others.

*Task Functions, Maintenance Functions,* and *Anti-Group Functions* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 4
# *Essential Elements of Effective Teams*

For a team to function effectively and individuals to fulfill their roles, the following characteristics should be cultivated in a team:

### Positive Interdependence

Positive interdependence means that each group member sees himself or herself as linked with each other member in a way that one member cannot succeed unless other members succeed. It also means that the work of each member of the team helps you in

your efforts and that, together, you improve the services you provide to individuals.

**Individual Accountability**

This means that you and every other member of the team has a responsibility to the group to follow through on assigned tasks with individuals. The team depends on you to follow through. It also means that every member of the team has the responsibility to give extra assistance to each other and offer encouragement to each other when asked for or needed. When everyone on the team is individually accountable in these ways, it is a "safe" environment for everyone and the goal of working for the client's or student's best interests is clear.

**Face-to-Face Interaction**

Face-to-face interaction means the amount of actual participation you have in the team. The smaller the team, the more chance you have to be actively involved. The larger the team, the less direct interaction and involvement you have. Smaller teams are better. The smaller the team, the more you will feel directly linked to the other members, and the easier it will be for you to work directly on the needs of clients/students.

**Collaborative Skills**

Collaborative skills includes cooperation, sharing, and working together for a common cause. It means that personal issues or personalities don't take precedence over the "product" of service delivery. It means that people are put together on a team because of their role or position and then are given equal opportunity to make a contribution. Each team member must feel they have something to share and contribute in providing for the well being of the student/client and they must be allowed to share that information.

**Group Processing**

This means the team needs to set aside time to talk with each other about how well they are working together on:

- The client's/student's goals.
- Their working relationship with each other as team members.

The team needs to develop a good balance between outcome goals (those for the client/student) and process goals (developing an effective team). If the team has some real difficulties with roles (whose job is this?) or positive supportive behaviors toward each other, they may need to call someone from the outside in to help set up some stable boundaries.

*Essential Elements of Effective Teams* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 5
# *What Paraprofessionals Need to Know to be Effective Team Members*

As a paraprofessional, you're an essential part of every team working with individuals with disabilities in school or vocational/residential settings. For you to fully participate on the team, you will need to know the following:

**Job Role**

As a paraprofessional, you're a vital member of the team. Learn what your role is and how that role functions within the team. At this point in this training you have done exercises to help you learn what your role is or should be in a given setting.

**Responsibilities**

Learn as much as possible about your responsibilities. In learning what your role is and what a paraprofessional job description is (or should be) in your chosen setting, you should have a general sense at this point of the job responsibilities.

**Goals**

Become familiar with the goals on which all members of the team are working. Those goals may be designed for one individual. The goals may be basic philosophical goals of the organization or school. You may be on several teams with different goals. It may seem, at times, like a juggling act to keep the goals separate for each team, but it's important to keep the goals clear.

**Time**

Participate on teams to whatever extent possible in your situation and work closely with staff. This is essential in paraprofessional job roles and responsibilities. To be an effective member of a team, work with staff to schedule meetings when you can attend and build in the time to prepare for conferences and staffings.

**Communication**

Communicating well with others is a critical skill. In order to get your views across to others and make your points clear, you need to have good, clear communication skills, as presented in the next section of this training.

# Section 6
# *The Individualized Planning Process*

## The Paraprofessional's Role in the Planning Process

A perfect example of teamwork is the development of an individual plan. There are many types of individual plans developed to meet the goals of individuals with disabilities, including the Individualized Education Plan, Individualized Family Service Plan, Individual Service Plan, Individual Community Support Plan, and the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program.

In each of these individual plans, it is essential that the paraprofessional be involved in the process because often it is the paraprofessional who is working most directly with the individual with the disability. For example, if the paraprofessional serves as the bus aide, he or she may also be the one staff member who has regular contact with parents. Therefore, often, the paraprofessional intimately knows the individual, the family, and their needs.

However, often in reality the paraprofessional may not be involved in the individual plan meetings. The meetings are either scheduled at times when a paraprofessional isn't on site (i.e., bus duty), or the paraprofessional isn't asked to attend. It is very important, as part of your team development skills, for you as a paraprofessional to emphasize the necessity of your attendance at these meetings. You're a crucial link. At the very least, you need to be given the opportunity to write a detailed report of your work with the students and recommendations. Because paraprofessionals are being given more and more responsibility, it's essential that you be involved in planning as vital team members.

## Types of Individual Plans

### The Individualized Educational Plan

The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is a written plan authorized and developed under Public Law 94-142 which, revised, is now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476) or IDEA. The IEP is a written plan for any student with a disability who qualifies for and receives special education services in the public school system. Four important requirements of IDEA concern:

- Notification.
- Participation in meetings.
- Content of the IEP.
- Agency responsibility.

The IEP describes a student's needs, outlines the instructional program, and defines types of services necessary to meet the student's needs. In order to develop this plan, a multidisciplinary team meets to determine the needs of the student. This team should include the student, the parent(s), the school psychologist, a general education teacher, the special education teacher, the paraprofessional, any community agency representatives involved with the student, and anyone else involved in planning for the unique needs of the students.

The team meets to determine the student's:

- Accomplishments.
- Educational goals.
- Supports needed for learning.
- Plans for the future.
- Related service needs.

Based on these discussions, a plan is written which the student and parents agree to and sign. (See Appendix A for a sample IEP form.)

**The Individualized Family Service Plan**

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed for young children with disabilities and their families. The impetus for the development of this plan came out of federal legislation that extended educational provisions under the age of five (Public Law 99-457). The purpose of the IFSP is to identify and facilitate the use of formal and informal resources that reflect the families' priorities for them and their children. The written IFSP must include:

- Information on the child's present level of functioning.
- The strengths and needs of the child's family.
- Major goals for the child and family with criteria, procedures, and timeline.
- Specific services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family.
- Dates for initiation and duration of services.
- Assignment of a case manager most immediately relevant to the child's needs.
- Steps to support the transition to preschool services.

**The Individual Service Plan**

Another plan is called the Individual Service Plan (ISP). This is a plan for persons with mental retardation or related conditions who apply for county social services. The ISP is developed by the case manager with the individual, the individual's legal representative, and their advocate, if any. The ISP must include:

- Results of the diagnosis.
- Summary of assessment information and recommendations.
- A written summary of those needs identified in the diagnosis and assessment.
- Identification of all service needs, including the type, amount, and frequency of the services needed and services to be provided by the case manager.
- Actions that will be taken to develop or obtain the services identified, including those services not currently available.
- Long-range goals and anticipated dates for attainment of goals.
- Annual goals related to the attainment of the long-range goals.
- Information providers must submit to the case manager and the frequency with which the information must be provided.
- Signatures of the person and legal representative to document that the ISP has been reviewed and that the person agrees to the goals and service specified.

**The Individual Community Support Plan**

Yet another type of individual plan is called the Individual Community Support Plan (ICSP). This plan is written by a county case manager with a person who has serious and persistent mental illness. The ICSP must include:

- Goals for the person.
- Services needed by the individual.
- Goals for each service.
- Amount, scope, frequency, and duration of each service
- Frequency of face-to-face contact between the person and case manager needed to implement the ICSP.
- Services involving the individual's family or primary caregiver or other interested persons.
- Steps the people and case manager will take to assure the individual's access to services identified in the plan.

**Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program**

The last individual plan to be cited here as an example of individual plans for persons with disabilities is the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP). Once a person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the counselor assists the individual in identifying vocational goals. Those goals are developed in the IWRP. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work on this plan with the individual and the case manager and any other agency people. The objectives and services in the plan are designed to overcome barriers which were identified in the diagnostic study as those that are keeping the person from employment.

# *Summary*

When team members are clear about their roles and the team function, cultivate the traits of an effective team, and value the participation of paraprofessional, the following can happen:

- Goals are realistic and possible because everyone contributes in developing them.
- The team members are committed and support each other.
- Priorities are understood and agreed upon.
- Ideas and communication are encouraged.
- Problem solving is done effectively.
- Feedback is honest and "on target".
- Conflict is okay, and is even seen as a normal way to discuss and solve problems.
- Team members get support from each other to be productive team members and productive in their personal goals.
- Team members encourage each other to try new ideas with clients/students and they support each other for those efforts.
- Team members understand the importance of *each* member on the team.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- How could the team you work on become more effective?
- How could you get more involved with the teams for the individual students with whom you work?
- What strategies could be used when team members can't seem to agree on a solution to a particular problem.

# 4 *Chapter Four*

# Legal Responsibilities


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# *Introduction*

There are many laws, rules, and regulations that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. As a paraprofessional, it is your responsibility to be familiar with these laws, as well as the policies your employer has developed to ensure the laws are followed at your workplace. Paraprofessionals who work directly with individuals with disabilities should be informed of and trained to follow the policies and procedures needed for their specific jobs. If you're unsure of these policies, ask your supervisor to provide you with a copy of the policies and procedures you're expected to follow.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand the laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- Understand and describe what information must be kept confidential when working with individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Understand and describe your responsibility regarding the abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

## Section 1
# *Laws that Protect the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities*

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973** guarantees that individuals with disabilities have access to buildings on which federal dollars have been spent and it protects the rights of individuals not to be discriminated against in jobs where federal dollars are being used. This legislation has been instrumental in increasing the accessibility of parks, monuments, museums, schools, universities, and other public buildings for individuals with disabilities.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) requires public schools to provide a free, appropriate education to all children, regardless of disability. This law mandates that each person being educated has an individual education plan designed to meet his or her specific needs. IDEA also mandates that families be part of the planning team for their child. A mechanism called "due process" was created so that parents who disagree with the plan have a way to formally object and to work, through channels, to resolve disagreements. (IDEA was formerly the Education for All Handicapped Act, PL 94-142).

**The Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA) of 1990 speaks especially to the workplace and the rights of individuals with disabilities to access business, industry, transportation, communications systems, and educational settings generally used by the public. It addresses accommodation — the alteration of job settings so that work can be done by people with disabilities.

## Section 2
## *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is one of the most critical and important aspects of your job as a paraprofessional. It's your legal responsibility to observe both the rights of individuals with disabilities and of parents in regard to data privacy. Follow these guidelines where issues of confidentiality are concerned:

- Never refer to other students or clients by name in another staffing or conference or with other parents.
- Don't share specific information about an individual's program or unique needs in the lounge or out in the community.
- Take questions you have about the organization's policies on confidentiality to the building supervisor or principal.
- Access individual records for the sole purpose of being more effective in your work with the individual.
- Go through the proper channels to access confidential information. Make sure you're authorized to do so.
- If you question policies and procedures used with an individual, discuss this privately with your supervisor. There is often confidential information that directs specific programming of which you may not be aware.
- Speak and write responsibly when passing on information. Be aware of who might hear you or read what you have written.

### Maintaining Confidentiality When Working with Students and Their Families

1 Why must confidentiality be maintained?

- *Federal laws, state regulations, and local policies require it.*

2 Who may have access to written or oral information about students or their families?

- *Only personnel responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services; and/or personnel with responsibility for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of a child or youth.*

3 Who should not have access to information about the performance level, behavior, program goals and objectives, or progress of a child or youth?

- *Personnel and others who are not responsible for planning or providing services to students or their families.*

4 What types of information do students and their families have the right to expect will be kept confidential?

- *The results of formal and informal assessments*
- *Social and behavioral actions*
- *Performance levels and progress*
- *Program goals and objectives*
- *Information about family relationships and other personal matters*

## Laws that Relate to Confidentiality

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act protects individuals by prohibiting the sharing of information about them without their permission.

### Chapter 20 U.S. Code, § 1232g and Chapter 34 Code of Federal Regulation, Part 99

Federal law requires any educational agency or institution receiving federal funding (most schools, vocational schools, community colleges, and universities) to grant parents of students the "right to inspect and review the education records of the student." The parent's right to review records only remains, however, until it is transferred to the student when that student either turns eighteen years old or enrolls in a post-secondary educational institution. Each educational agency or institution must develop procedures to allow students to review their records. However, if the records in a student's file contain names and information relating to other students, the parent has only the right to see those records which relate to "such student or to be informed of the specific information contained in such part of such material."

Under federal law, each educational agency or institution must also provide parents an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of a student's records to ensure the content of the records is accurate, not misleading, or otherwise violative of the privacy or rights of students. Parents are granted an opportunity to make corrections, deletions, or to insert a written explanation.

The following records are not required to be given out even upon request of parents or students in a post-secondary setting:

- Instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and educational personnel records that are completed by a particular individual and only that individual or a substitute have access to such records.
- Certain law enforcement unit records.

- Certain employee records maintained by the educational agency or institution.
- Records maintained on students in post-secondary educational settings by physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other recognized professionals in the course of treatment except upon the student's authorization for release of information to another physician or recognized professional.

However, even if the parent or student doesn't consent, certain records may have to be released pursuant to judicial orders and subpoenas, audits, and evaluations of federally supported programs, and certain record-keeping procedures.

# Section 3
# *Abuse & Neglect*

You're required by law to report any suspected incidents of abuse or neglect because paraprofessionals are in positions that provide services to children and adults. This includes abuse suspected internally (within your setting) or externally (outside of your setting). All states impose a civil or criminal penalty on those who don't report incidents. Make sure you're aware of your school or organization's procedure. In most cases, paraprofessionals would report any suspicions to an immediate supervisor. Your identity is protected by law when you report any suspected cases. Knowing this, you must then know what signs to look for that indicate abuse or neglect. There can be many and they can be particularly hard to detect with individuals with disabilities because of the complexity of problems. However, here are a few signs to look for:

## Signs of Abuse

### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Malnutrition
- Constant fatigue or listlessness
- Poor hygiene
- Inadequate clothing for weather conditions
- Appearance of overall poor care
- Injuries treated inappropriately or inadequately
- Improper supervision for needs
- Poor work/school attendance
- Drug or alcohol use

- Excessive child care or other responsibilities which are expected in order to have basic needs met

**Signs of Emotional Abuse**

- Very low or high body weight
- Lack of concern for physical appearance
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking)
- Sleep disorders
- Poor self-concept
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hostility
- Unresponsive to praise
- Antisocial behaviors

**Signs of Sexual Abuse**

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Bruises, abrasions, or bleeding in the genital or perineal area
- Swelling of genitalia
- Complaints of genital pain
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Behavioral signs depend on the age and maturity of the individual, the nature and duration of the abuse, and the individual's relationship to the abuser. They may include the following:
  - Becoming withdrawn
  - Daydreaming excessively
  - Exhibiting poor self-esteem
  - Seeming frightened or phobic
  - Expressing feelings of guilt or shame
  - Declining performance in school or on the job
  - Acting suddenly younger and more immature

## Laws Related to Abuse & Neglect

It's important to understand some basic laws that apply to your work with individuals who may be subject to abuse and/or neglect. This is just a brief description of some basic information about key laws you should know.

- **The Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Act (MN Statutes, § 626.557):** This is a law passed in Minnesota that requires all people in licensed occupations and others to report abuse and neglect of a group of citizens known as *vulnerable*

*adults.* These people include individuals with mental and physical disabilities, the elderly, or other adults who can't protect themselves. The reporting of abuse or neglect of these individuals should be made directly to your supervisor if you suspect any condition that isn't healthy or safe for individuals. If you suspect your supervisor or institution of abuse or neglect, you should report incidents to legal authorities.

- **The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, § 626.556):** Neglect of children is defined in two places in Minnesota state law. Anyone can report abuse or neglect. However, under legal mandate, professionals and paraprofessionals are required to report any suspected incident of child abuse by anyone working in healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, law enforcement, or the clergy. A list of mandated reporters would be physicians, dentists, educators, day care staff, group home staff, therapists, clergy, foster parents, pharmacists, social workers, guardians *ad litem,* and nurses. Paraprofessionals fall into this category and are mandated by state law to report any suspected cases of child abuse. Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability. The reporter's name is confidential, accessible only upon consent of the reporter or by court order.

## Reading 1: What Can I Do to Prevent Harm to Children?

The parents of an abused or neglected child may exhibit some of the following behaviors or characteristics:

- Isolation from family supports such as friends, relatives, neighbors, and community groups. They consistently fail to keep appointments, discourage social contacts, or don't participate in school activities or events.
- Lack of trust.
- Were themselves abused or neglected as children.
- Reluctance to give information about the child's injuries or condition. When questioned, they are unable to explain the injuries, or they offer farfetched or contradictory explanations.
- Inappropriate responses to the seriousness of the child's condition. They either overreact, seeming hostile or antagonistic when questioned even casually, or they underreact, showing little concern or awareness and seeming more preoccupied with their own problems than with the child's.
- Refusal to consent to diagnostic studies.
- Failure to seek timely or appropriate medical care for the child for routine checkups, optometry, dental care, or for treatment

of an injury or illness. In taking an injured child for medical care, they may choose a different hospital or doctor each time.

- Too critical of the child and seldom, if ever, discuss the child in positive terms.
- Unrealistic expectations of the child, expecting or demanding behavior that is beyond the child's years or ability.
- Belief in the necessity of harsh punishment for children.
- Seldom touch or look at the child; may ignore the child's crying or react with impatience.
- Confinement of the child, perhaps in a crib or playpen, for long periods of time.
- Lack understanding of the child's physical, emotional, and psychological needs.
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Lack control or have a fear of losing control.

The material in *Abuse & Neglect* adapted with permission from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota; the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center, State Planning Agency, 658 Cedar, St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Learner Support Systems, 550 Cedar, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Reading 2: Vulnerability

Vulnerable adults are persons aged eighteen or older who:

- Live in licensed facilities such as nursing homes, hospitals, and treatment centers for chemical dependency, mental retardation, mental illness, or physical disabilities, *or*
- Receive services from licensed facilities such as developmental achievement centers or home health agencies, *or*
- Are in family settings and would not by themselves report abuse or neglect because of impaired physical or mental function, or because of emotional status.

Some types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse:** Conduct that produces pain or injury and isn't accidental.
- **Verbal abuse:** Repeated conduct that produces mental or emotional stress.
- **Sexual abuse:** Violation of criminal sexual conduct or prostitution statutes.
- **Exploitation:** Illegal use of vulnerable adult's person or property through undue influence, duress, deception, or fraud.

Some examples of neglect include:

- **Caretaker neglect:** Failure of caretaker to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.
- **Self-neglect:** Absence of necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.
- **Exploitation through neglect:** Absence of necessary financial management that might lead to exploitation.

**How to Report Your Concerns**

Call your local county social services agency or law enforcement office (city or county) and report the following:

- What happened.
- To whom it happened.
- When it happened.
- Where it happened.
- Who perpetrated the abuse.
- Who was responsible for the neglect.

After you report, a process of investigation and protection will begin right away for the vulnerable adult. You need fear no reprisal or civil action if you make your report in good faith.

For more information about the law or about reporting abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, please call your local county social services agency or law enforcement authorities.

# *Summary*

As a paraprofessional working with individuals with disabilities and their families, it is your responsibility to follow the policies and procedures designed to ensure their rights and protections under the law. This is particularly important when dealing with confidential information such as the details of a student's personal and/or family life. You must know what information can and cannot be shared and with whom. It is important to note that all information regarding the abuse or neglect (or suspicion of abuse or neglect) must be reported immediately to the proper authority. Be sure that you're clear about your school or organization's policies regarding these issues.

## Questions to Ponder

- You suspect that one of your students is being abused at home. What do you do?
- You suspect someone in your school/organization is being abusive to some of the students/consumers. What do you do?
- You ask your supervisor for a copy of the school/organization policies regarding confidentiality and abuse/neglect. He or she says there's no written policy. What do you do?

# 5

## *Chapter Five*

# Communication


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# *Introduction*

Clear communication with the staff with whom you work is essential in a workable relationship between a paraprofessional and other staff members. When in doubt, communicate. Communication is most effective when people:

- Communicate clearly.
- Communicate often.
- Communicate with *all* parties involved.
- Really listen to each other.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and identify personal communication strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand and describe barriers to communication and strategies to overcome them.
- Understand and describe roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working in a school or residential/vocational setting.
- Utilize a problem-solving technique to work collaboratively to solve a specific work-related problem.

## Section 1
## *Basic Communication Strategies*

Here are some strategies to remember when trying to pay attention to positive communication:

- Active listeners make good communicators. Active listeners have positive attitudes and open minds. They show interest in what the other person is saying by nonverbal cues, good eye contact, and remembering what was said.
- The attitudes and feelings of both the supervisor and paraprofessional must be known, respected, and understood. If they aren't shared, the relationship won't be open or growing. Those attitudes cover such arenas as individual roles and duties, persons with disabilities, instructional styles, management styles, and the contributions of others (and each other).
- An understanding of similarities and differences between supervisor and paraprofessional must be recognized and understood. Those may relate to different values, cultural and religious heritage, levels of education, or levels of experience.

- The paraprofessional and immediate supervisor should develop and share a common vocabulary and a system of nonverbal cues. Verbal and nonverbal cues play an important part in communication. Gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact are examples of nonverbal communication. Facial expressions give feedback about whether or not information has been understood and is being received, and the listener's attitude about the information. Posture and body movements also communicate attitude. Eye contact and facial expressions can give a sense of a positive – or negative – relationship between people.
- The supervisor must make sure directions and expectations are clearly understood and that the paraprofessional is able to perform the assigned tasks prior to implementing them.
- The paraprofessional must be willing and assertive enough to ask for clarification or assistance if the assignment isn't understood. The paraprofessional needs to explain in an assertive (not aggressive) manner what he or she needs from the supervisor to be successful.
- The supervisor should discuss with the paraprofessional and then decide together what special interests, talents, and training the paraprofessional has that will complement and enhance the delivery of services.
- The paraprofessional and his or her immediate supervisor must work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.
- Silence is a form of communication. It's a difficult form of communication to understand because it can mean anger, or grief or depression. It can also mean that the listener understands what is being said. It is important to be assertive in your response when listening so the person who is trying to communicate with you knows your level of understanding and that there is agreement. When you remain silent, you block that ability to have cooperative communication.

## Guidelines for Team Consensus

Teams are marked by mutual ownership. Using consensus during problem-solving discussions is critical for each person so all can claim ownership for the outcomes and solutions. Important guidelines for using a consensus approach are:

- Listening and paying attention to each other.
- Asking open-ended questions using "what" and "how."
- Not agreeing too quickly with each other.

- Generating multiple options – challenge the limits!
- Treating options as alternatives not answers.
- Not arguing blindly for *your* views.
- Treating your differences as strengths.

You will know you have reached consensus when:

- Both of you agree on a single alternative.
- Each of you can honestly say:
  - "I believe you understand my point of view."
  - "I believe I understand your point of view."
  - "Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was arrived at fairly and openly and it's the best solution for *us* at this time."

## Twelve Barriers to Communication

### 1 Judgment

- **Criticizing:** A judgmental roadblock is criticism. Parents think they need to judge their children or they will never become hard-working, mannerly adults. Teachers and paraprofessionals frequently think they must criticize their students or they will never learn.
- **Name Calling:** "Putting down" or stereotyping the other person. "What a dope!" "Just like a woman." "Egghead." "You hardhats are all alike." "You're just another insensitive male."
- **Diagnosing:** Analyzing why a person is behaving as he or she is; playing amateur psychiatrist. "I can read you like a book." "You're just doing that to irritate me." "Just because you went to college, you think you're better than I am."
- **Praising Evaluatively:** Making a positive judgment of the other person and his or her action or attitudes. "You are always such a good child – I know you'll help me with the lawn tonight."

### 2 Sending Solutions

- **Ordering:** Commanding the other person to do what you want to have done. "Do your homework right now." "Why? Because I said so..."
- **Threatening:** Trying to control the other's actions by warning of negative consequences that you will instigate. "You'll do it or else..." "Stop that noise right now or I'll keep the whole class after school."
- **Moralizing:** Telling another person what she should do. "You shouldn't get a divorce – think of what will happen to the children." "You ought to tell him you're sorry."

- **Excessive/Inappropriate Questions:** Closed-ended questions are often barriers in a relationship; these are the type of questions that can usually be answered in a few words – often with a yes or no. "When did it happen?" "Are you sorry you did it?"

**3 Avoiding the Other's Concerns**

- **Advising:** Giving the other person a solution to her problems. "If I were you, I'd sure tell him off." "That's an easy one to solve. First..."
- **Diverting:** Pushing the other's problems aside through distraction. "Don't dwell on it Sarah. Let's talk about something more pleasant." "Think *you've* got it bad? Let me tell you what happened to *me*."
- **Logical Argument:** Attempting to convince the other with an appeal to facts or logic, usually without consideration of the emotional factors involved. "Look at the facts; if you hadn't bought that new car, we could have made the down payment on the house."
- **Reassuring:** Trying to stop the other person from feeling the negative emotions he or she is experiencing. "Don't worry, it's always darkest before the dawn." "It'll work out in the end."

*Twelve Barriers to Communication* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

# Section 2
# *Communication Styles*

## Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is the most desirable and productive behavior in accomplishing your job. Assertive communication doesn't always feel "comfortable." The first step in being assertive is understanding what "assertive" means. Assertive communication comes when you:

- Know what you need.
- Express yourself clearly.
- Choose the best time to discuss issues.
- Check for clarification.
- Act in an empowered manner.
- Act responsibly and follow through.
- Act in a direct manner.
- Express yourself honestly and respectfully.

## Passive Communication

Passive or nonassertive communication occurs when you remain silent when you ought to ask for help or explain your needs. Passive behavior communicates a sense of inferiority. The passive person acts as if others' rights and needs are more important than his or her own.

With this communication style, others don't know when you need help because you try to act as if there's no problem. This behavior doesn't serve you well on the job, or with the individuals for whom you're working. The paraprofessional needs to feel comfortable, and know that he or she has the right to ask for assistance when needed.

## Aggressive Communication

Aggressive communication is very demanding and is often disrespectful to those at whom it's directed. Aggressive communication frequently gives the impression that "my needs, wants, and rights come first." When someone is acting in an aggressive manner, he or she doesn't ask for assistance, but demands it. This communication style is usually met by strong disapproval.

## A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior

| | Passive | Assertive | Aggressive |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Characteristics of behavior** | Emotionally dishonest, denies own rights to minimize conflict. | (Appropriately) emotionally honest, self-enhancing, direct, expressive. | (Inappropriately) emotionally honest, self-enhancing, direct. |
| **Your feelings when you engage in this behavior** | Angry, hurt, pushed around. | Confident. | Self-righteous, superior, possibly guilty then & later. |
| **Other people's feelings about themselves when you engage in this behavior** | Superior, burdened by the responsibility | Valued or respected. | Hurt, humiliated. |
| **Other people's feelings about you when you engage in this behavior** | Pity, irritation. | Generally respected. | Angry, vengeful. |

*A Comparison of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

### Body Language and Voice

| | Passive | Assertive | Aggressive |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eye Contact** | Avoids eye contact | Direct | Glaring, looking down |
| **Facial Expression** | Tense | Appropriate to the content of verbal message | |
| **Posture** | Slouched | Erect, but not stiff | Rigid |
| **Gestures** | Fidgeting, "hiding" behind arms, legs, nervous gestures | Open, not closed, gestures for emphasis, not fidgety | Pointing fingers fist, hands on hips, violates others' personal space |
| **Voice** | Lacks confidence | Congruent with verbal message, sincere, confident | Demanding or sarcastic |
| **Volume** | Too quiet | Well projected | Loud |
| **Pace** | Too slow, halting | Evenly paced | Too fast |

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# Section 3
# *Communication with Families*

Sometimes paraprofessionals know students or clients better than almost anyone else because of the close relationship they have with individuals on a daily basis. This often creates a strong bond between the paraprofessional and each client/student. In many cases, the paraprofessional is also the bus aide and rides to and from school or work with the individual, which means the paraprofessional often has daily contact with the parents. It's natural for parents to meet the bus and ask, "Well, how did things go today?" It's also natural for paraprofessionals to establish relationships with the parents that are more consistent and regular than any other staff person. It would be easy for the paraprofessional to share information, in a casual way, that in other circumstances would never be shared. These are tricky situations. The paraprofessional must remember a few basic rules:

- Establish some ground rules with your supervisor if you're in daily contact with parents so you know clearly what communication is appropriate and what isn't. Ask for clear boundaries or guidelines.
- It may be efficient for you to deliver written contact to parents, but make sure the parents understand that you're only delivering information on behalf of the teacher/supervisor.
- Remember the rules of confidentiality at *all* times. Do not share information about other students/clients under any circumstances, unless otherwise advised.
- Remember that the teacher/supervisor is the person responsible for setting up instruction and planning for the individual. If the parent has concerns or questions, tell them you will give the information to the proper person, or ask them to make that contact. Never put yourself in a position where you're making decisions with parents that you don't have the authority to make.
- Make sure that the student/client knows that you are not to be placed in the middle of situations between home and the school/organization.

# Section 4
# *Good Communication with Supervisors*

### Problem-Solving Techniques

In working side by side, day after day with your supervisor, you're bound to have differences in the way each of you would handle different situations. These may be differences revolving around procedures, personal issues, or techniques. It may be that the two of you have different perceptions, or perhaps you have clashing emotional needs. The conflict may come from a source as basic (and common) as having limited resources and deciding how to use them.

Conflict isn't necessarily negative. There are positive functions of conflict that are important to remember when working through differences. Some of those positives are:

- Questioning makes people have to clarify their position.
- Questioning helps others looks at different perceptions, concerns, and interests.
- Questioning encourages others to look for new facts.
- Questioning provides a source for developing more specific and long lasting solutions.

- Questioning gives the opportunity to establish mutual trust.
- Questioning results in personal and social change.
- Questioning prevents situations from getting worse.

The following series of problem-solving techniques was developed by Anna Lou Pickett (1988). You may find these helpful in improving your ability to work better in a team and with your supervisor.

- **Identifying and Describing the Problem.** A situation must be seen and clearly understood before it can be resolved. It isn't always easy to put a problem into words, but if it can't be stated clearly, it will be impossible to choose a course of action that will lead to a satisfactory solution. Each person must describe the situation in his or her own words and from their point of view. This can be done by asking questions like: "What is the problem?" "Who is involved?" "Who is affected?" "How are they affected?"
- **Defining and Determining the Cause of the Problem.** It's essential, next, to determine what caused the problem. Was it caused by outside conditions (such as contractual agreements, budget crunches, etc.)? In this case, the team may have little control over the situation, but can work together to decide how to "survive" the situation together or work to change it. The cause may be a misunderstanding of job roles and responsibilities. The problem may be caused by a difference in values, attitudes, age, work experience, education, cultural heritage, religious beliefs, or other personal traits. Whatever the cause, it must be clearly determined.
- **Deciding on a Goal and Identifying Alternatives.** Now you can develop strategies. Ask yourselves: "What do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" All those who are involved in the conflict should brainstorm a list of solutions. More information may be needed in some areas to have a workable list of solutions. Take the time to get all the information needed.
- **Selecting and Implementing a Course of Action.** All those participating in the brainstorming should decide which solution will fit the best for all involved. Everyone must agree on the solution, try it out and see if it works, and get back together to revise or change the plan as needed. Before making any changes, though, each party should give the solution enough time to see if it will work since new behaviors and skills don't often change easily.
- **Evaluating the Results.** Revising and changing to meet the needs is essential. No solution is ever permanent. The group should regularly evaluate the solution and make adjustments

as needed. If the solution isn't working, maybe help from outside sources is needed.

*Problem-Solving Techniques* reprinted with permission from Pickett, A.L. (1988). *A training program for paraprofessionals working with special education and related services.* New York: City University of New York, National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services.

## Problem-Solving Work Session

It's essential to work through differences in order for the paraprofessional and the teacher, supervisor, or the larger team to succeed in providing the best service possible for the clients or students. The following checklists can help you solve problems and help you refocus as a team:

## The Breakdown Checklist

Maybe the two of you aren't sure where the breakdown in communication took place. There is such tremendous diversity of experience and focus in the nature of your jobs. It's important to remember that you both have the right to be different and to be honored for your differences. Going through the exercise called *Breakdown Checklist* can help pinpoint the problem areas. You can go through these questions together or individually. Just the act of doing the worksheet can be the spark that helps resolve the situation because as you answer the questions, the problem area will become obvious. Then you can talk through the problem and come to a solution.

**Directions:** Respond with a *yes* or *no* to each question. You can make your responses together or individually. If you choose to work individually, have your supervisor use the appropriate checklist column (S), fold it under and then have the paraprofessional check appropriate column (P). Then discuss similarities and differences between your responses.

| | *Response* P | S |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Am I sharing information about student performance and growth? | ____ | ____ |
| 2 Are we conferencing frequently enough? | ____ | ____ |
| 3 Do we set aside time to applaud each other's successes? | ____ | ____ |
| 4 Do I recognize my partner's freedom to reject as well as accept solutions? | ____ | ____ |
| 5 Do we need to work specifically on any of these areas? | | |
| A Territoriality | ____ | ____ |
| B Joint Responsibility | ____ | ____ |
| C Job Descriptions | ____ | ____ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| D | Goal Setting | ____ | ____ |
| E | Student Evaluations | ____ | ____ |
| F | Role Clarity | ____ | ____ |
| 6 | Are we setting expectations too high? | ____ | ____ |
| 7 | Are we setting expectations too low? | ____ | ____ |
| 8 | Do I focus on present and future issues not past difficulties? | ____ | ____ |
| 9 | Do I describe to my partner not judge? | ____ | ____ |
| 10 | Do I focus on specifics rather than generalities when I talk? | ____ | ____ |
| 11 | Am I focusing on issues and goals not personalities? | ____ | ____ |

*Breakdown Checklist* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991) *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Solutions Checklist: Differences Lead to Solutions

If the problem continues or gets worse after completing the *Breakdown Checklist*, the *Solutions Checklist* will provide a collaborative structure for problem solving. Notice that four steps exist in this model: *separate, focus, generate,* and *develop.* Each requires that you create your response, record your partner's response, and develop a joint response. You will need two copies of the worksheet – one for each of you. This may seem like an elaborate process for problem solving, but if you practice it as an exercise in class and with your supervisor, it will eventually become an automatic, natural way of dealing with issues.

### 1 Separate

Separate people from the problem. Differences in issue disputes are generally defined by differences in perception between you and your partner. The goal is to reduce the areas of conflict in perception.

- Your Response: *I think the problem is:*

  _____

- Partner's Response: *My partner thinks the problem is:*

  _____

- Joint Response: *Together we think the problem is:*

  _____

### 2 Focus

Focus on interests, not personal positions. For every interest there usually exists several possible positions that could satisfy it. Every personal position generally supports only one interest.

Therefore, in order to develop mutual solutions to support several positions, the two of you should focus on clarifying interests. The goal is to identify interests behind positions.

- Your Responses:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *A behavior I am exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

  *A behavior _____ is exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

- Partner's Responses:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *A behavior I am exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

  *A behavior _____ is exhibiting that contributes to this problem is:*

  _____

- Joint Response:

  *The people involved in this problem are:*

  _____

  *The problem exists because:*

  _____

  *Our behaviors are:*

  _____

  *Other people's behaviors are:*

  _____

**3 Generate**

Generate a variety of options. The two of you aren't trying to search for a single answer but are trying to broaden options available by generating multiple alternatives. The goal is to invent creative options.

- Your Options: *Three alternatives I see for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

- Partner's Options: *Three alternatives my partner sees for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

- Joint Options: *Three alternatives we see for dealing with the problem:*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

**4 Develop**

Develop solutions based on criteria. The more the two of you apply standards of fairness, efficiency, and resource availability to bear on problems, the more likely you will produce a solution based on consensus. The goal is to choose and implement an option based on objective criteria.

- Your Response: *I would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- Partner's Response: *I would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- Joint Response: *We would choose option _____ because:*

_____

_____

_____

- As the teacher, I will:

_____

_____

_____

- As the paraprofessional, I will:

_____

_____

_____

- We have the following materials:

_____

_____

_____

_____

- We can consult the following resources:

_____

_____

_____

_____

- We can ask _____ to assist by:

_____

_____

_____

_____

- We can implement this option by (*date*) _____ and evaluate its effectiveness by observing the following:

_____

_____

_____

_____

*Solutions Checklist* reprinted with permission from Emery, M.J. (1991) *Building team pride: Teachers and paraprofessionals working together.* Columbia, MO: Center for Innovations in Special Education.

## Problem Solving Role Play Situation

Another way to develop problem-solving skills and work through difficult situations is by role playing. Role playing is the process of acting out a scenario with others and practicing different responses to a situation. For practice with problem-solving techniques, role play the situation below with a partner.

> Without the opportunity to talk it through with your supervisor, you decided a student was ready to ride the bus to work unsupervised. Part of that decision came because you were "shorthanded," many other paraprofessionals and staff members were out sick, and your supervisor was unavailable to help make this quick decision. The client/student made the trip okay, but had some fears that he or she expressed rather aggressively on return. You, therefore, were held responsible for making the wrong decision.

- What are the issues to resolve in this situation?

- Did the paraprofessional make the right choice of how to handle this situation "in a pinch"?

- After the situation had occurred, how do you think the paraprofessional should have talked to the student about what happened?

- To the supervisor?

# *Summary*

Effective communication is a key element in creating a productive and enjoyable work environment. Whether you're working with a student, his or her family, or your supervisor, it's important to communicate as openly and as clearly as possible. Listening closely to the person with whom you are communicating will prove invaluable in avoiding misunderstandings. Recognizing and respecting differences and similarities in attitudes, feelings, cultures, and expectations of others will enhance your ability to communicate with the individuals with whom you work and those in your everyday life.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- Think of a problem you're having at work (or one that you've had recently). How will you go about solving it using one of the techniques discussed in this chapter?
- A parent wants to set up a meeting to discuss his or her child's education plan. What do you do?
- You don't feel your supervisor is really listening to you regarding one of your students. How do you go about improving your ability to communicate and his or her ability to listen?

# 6

## *Chapter Six*

# Learning Styles


65 Introduction

65 Section 1: Identifying Your Personal Learning Styles

67 Section 2: How to Use Learning Style Information

70 Summary

70 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

One of the most important aspects of instructing others and receiving instructions yourself is understanding the different ways people learn. Some people learn best by seeing information; they are *visual learners.* Some learn best by hearing information; they are *auditory learners.* Some learn best by doing activities or by movement attached to the learning; they are *kinesthetic* or *hands-on learners.* These different ways of learning are called *learning styles.*

When people learn new information in a way that is most natural for them, they learn more easily and remember the information better. This is true for everyone. Understanding your learning style will help you understand not only how you learn but also how you train others to learn new information.

In your role as a paraprofessional, it's important for you to be aware of your learning styles to understand that:

- All people don't learn in the same way.
- What sometimes appears to be an aspect of learning style may be related to an individual's cultural experience or tradition.
- It's important to use a variety of techniques when giving direction and instruction.
- Although it may be easier for you to instruct with techniques using your own learning style, it might not be the best way for the individual you're teaching.

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand characteristics of learners who possess different learning styles.
- Recognize how your learning style affects the way you learn and/or teach others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of strategies to effectively teach students with different learning styles.

**Section 1**

# *Identifying Your Personal Learning Styles*

### The ELSIE Learning Styles Inventory

The *ELSIE* (*Edmund's Learning Style Identification Exercise*) was developed by Harry Reinert of Edmund's High School in Washington state. This exercise can be used to help people understand

which study techniques and learning methods might be most effective for them and is based on the idea that methods for learning the most efficiently vary from individual to individual. This is only a tool to learn more about yourself.

As you complete the *ELSIE*, which can be found in Appendix D, it's important for you to remember these facts about any single learning styles inventory:

- Any inventory is just a guide to what you already know about yourself.
- Each person has an individual style. No style is right or wrong.
- You aren't "stuck" with one style. Look at the inventory as a whole and what it tells you about yourself.
- The results of this or any inventory vary depending on your mood or state of mind. Use the results as an indicator of your preferred learning style and not as a final verdict.
- Your learning style may vary from situation to situation. When put in a situation where you have to use another way to learn, you're probably able to do that just fine. This inventory just indicates that, when given a choice, this is your preferred style.

## The ELSIE Results

What does the *ELSIE* tell you about yourself now that you have taken the inventory and scored it? The four key areas are described below with a guide to interpreting the scores:

1 **Visualization.** This category indicates the relative importance to the learner of actually seeing objects and activities in order to learn.

2 **Written Word.** This category is distinguished from the first by noting whether a person will get more details from a certain incident by seeing the event occur (visualization) or by reading a description of the event (written word). Persons scoring very high in this category have a great dependence on the written word. Persons scoring very low in this category may read quite well, but tend to translate written words into another category (visual images or sounds) rather than being able to get meaning from the words immediately.

3 **Auditory (Listening).** This category indicates the degree to which the person is able to learn from hearing the spoken language without recourse to some other mode. Persons scoring very high in this category will find audio tapes an invaluable aid in learning. Those who score very low will probably need to work to increase comprehension of the spoken language.

4 **Feeling (Activity).** This category represents how important some manner of physical activity is to the learning process. A person scoring above the median band in this category will

find it a definite advantage to become physically active in some way in order to facilitate learning. Such activities can be as simple as taking notes, writing out exercises, or pacing the floor while memorizing. Persons who score fairly high in this category are usually compulsive note-takers in class but seldom need to refer to their notes at a later time because the activity of writing seems to impress the information on their memory.

The most critical factor in interpreting the profile is to evaluate the scores in all four categories in relation to one another and not in isolation. Remembering that scores falling in the 0 or ± 1 range are very close to the norm, we may assume the individual is able to operate effectively with such scores (i.e., material presented in these modes will be neither excessively difficult nor automatically imprinted in the memory). Since the fourth category (activity) is primarily supplementary, a score in the +2 band or above requires that scores in the other bands be read approximately one band higher than they appear on the chart.

For example, if a person has -1 in visualization, 0 in written word, -3 in listening, and +3 in activity, this would indicate that the person could learn effectively by either seeing pictures or reading, but it would be very important for the person to be physically involved, perhaps by underlining passages in a book or taking notes, by drawing his or her own versions of pictures, by participating in skits, etc.

## Section 2
## *How to Use Learning Style Information*

When you evaluate your graph from the *ELSIE Learning Style Identification Exercise,* it's important to look at the whole chart, rather than just the highs and lows. The highest range areas, however, are probably the learning style areas in which you learn information most easily. For this reason, when studying new information, use the learning mode where you have the greatest strength. The areas of strength (high points on your graph) also probably indicate the way you would choose to give or receive instruction.

With this new (or reinforced) information about your learning style, consider the following tips when receiving or giving instruction. Remember, people don't all learn the same way, so you must ask for instruction in a way that works best for you (or adapt the information on your own), and you must give information to others in more than just your own preferred style.

### Visualization

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by actually seeing and observing objects and activities. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Highlighting the important facts in printed information.
- Color-coding information. For example, you might use colored highlighters for different types of information: pink = *urgent*; green = *remember this*; yellow = *key terminology*. Another example is to use different colored folders for different groups.
- Using videotapes to illustrate and support information, procedures, or demonstrations.
- Labeling equipment by name and materials.
- Making drawings to help the understanding of concepts.
- Making outlines of key facts, timelines, charts, and graphs.

### Written Word

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by seeing or reading a description of a procedure or activity. You most likely rely on the written word to learn information. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Organizing class notes into outlines.
- Highlighting key points in directions, instructions, texts, etc.
- Using flashcards for learning key information.
- Getting more written information on the same topic.
- Getting a copy of lecture notes or outline of key information.
- Asking for written instructions.

### Listening

If you scored high in this area, you probably learn best by hearing the spoken word, without the need to rely on any other mode. Examples of activities that will support this strength both in your learning and the instruction you give to others are:

- Using audiotapes to learn information or reinforce learning.
- Encouraging participation in discussions.
- Asking for instructions to be read aloud.
- Getting printed material in audiotape version.
- Asking for directions to be given aloud.
- Sitting close to the instructor. Write down only the key points. Spend most of your time listening, because it's your strength.

- Asking to explain back to the person what you heard for verification that you have a clear understanding of the information.
- Making checklists to support what you heard.

### Activity

If you scored high in the area of physical activity, you probably need some form of physical activity to help you learn. Examples that will support this strength in your learning and instruction you give to others are:

- Taking notes. Even if you don't read them later, the activity of taking the notes will enhance your learning.
- Completing or creating writing assignments as a way of restating the information through the act of writing.
- Pacing the floor, washing the dishes, housecleaning – doing *some activity* while memorizing information.
- Getting involved in "hands-on" demonstrations.
- Volunteering to help set up or take down learning activities.
- "Walking through" directions or procedures.
- Manipulating materials to learn how to use them.
- Constructing, drawing, or making models to teach yourself.
- Using the computer to reinforce learning.

### Putting the ELSIE to Work

Think of situations when you were in school that were really hard for you. Could those learning situations have been easier for you if you'd known about your learning style?

Think of one situation and how, knowing what you know now about your learning style, you would handle that situation differently. Use the following worksheet to write down the situation and your new approach. Be ready to share this in discussion.

1 Name a learning situation that was difficult for you when you were in school or on a job.

2 What was your learning style ?

3 What was the teacher's (or supervisor's) teaching style?

4 What did you do to be successful in that learning situation?

5 Why did that work well for you? If it didn't, why?

6 From what you've learned about your personal learning style from the *ELSIE*, how would you handle that situation differently today? List some requests you would make of the teacher or ways you would structure your learning.

## *Summary*

This chapter has focused on ways you can identify learning styles in yourself and in others. An understanding of your personal learning style will help you with training and working with others.

As you find out more about your learning style, think about how it affects the ways you do things at home or socially. How does your learning style affect the way you work with students?

When working with students, try to become aware of their learning styles. This is most easily done by observing their work and behavior in class. It's important to remember that all people don't learn in the same way. Using a variety of teaching strategies when working with students will help you choose the most effective instructional methods possible.

## *Questions to Ponder*

1 How does your learning style affect the way you work with others?

2 Do you and your supervisor do things in the same way? Are your styles different or the same?

3 Do you sometimes have conflicts with others about how to do something because you feel your way is right, when it might actually be a conflict between your learning styles?

7

*Chapter Seven*

# Stress & Burnout on the Job


71 Introduction

71 Section 1: What is Stress?

74 Section 2: Stress Management

79 Summary

79 Questions to Ponder

# *Introduction*

There's a very high cost to avoiding conflict or resolving conflict. The highest price is a high level of stress on the job. The following is a list of what can lead to stress:

- Built up resentments that eventually explode.
- Taking out resentments on an innocent person who isn't involved in the conflict at all, like the client/student or another staff member.
- Gossiping and back-biting.
- Creating a poisoned work environment that leads to high stress for the whole staff as well as the students/clients.
- Stress-related illnesses for you and others.
- A sense of powerlessness in your job.
- Institutional practices that are rigid and inflexible.
- Poor personal time-management skills.
- Boredom; lack of challenge in the job.
- Poor quality relationships.
- Overload on the job.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the difference between stress and distress.
- Understand the stages of stress and burnout and recognize if and how it may affect one's life.
- Understand and describe strategies to help you relax and handle stress and distress on and off the job.

## Section 1
# *What is Stress?*

What do all of these people and situations have in common?

- A nineteen-year-old boy learns his girlfriend has been killed in an auto accident.
- A business person loses an important business deal to his or her competitor.
- An athlete receives a first-place award at a track event.
- A fifteen-year-old girl approaches a boy to ask him out for the first time.

*Stress.* This may surprise you because the last two situations both

involve happy events. The fact is that it does not matter whether the situation is pleasant or unpleasant, according to Hans Selye, M.D. What counts is the intensity of the demand it places on you to readjust. The late Dr. Selye, author of *The Stress of Life* and numberous other books on stress, calls these incidents *stressors.*

He states that the physical reaction of the body to stress is basically the same regardless of the stressor. Furthermore, he feels that the only complete freedom from stress is death. Humans thrive on stress because it makes life more interesting.

No matter what you're doing, you're under some amount of stress. Even while you sleep, your body must continue to function and react to the stress imposed by dreaming. Stress comes from two basic forces: the stress of physical activity and the stress of mental/emotional activity. It's interesting to note that stress from emotional frustration is more likely to produce diseases such as ulcers, than is stress from physical work or exercise. In fact, physical exercise can relax you and help you deal with mental stress.

## Stress or Distress?

Dr. Selye feels that there is a type of stress that can be harmful. He calls it *distress.* Distress is continual stress that causes you to constantly readjust or adapt. For example, having a job you don't like can be constantly frustrating and frustration is bad stress. If this distress lasts long enough, it can result in fatigue, exhaustion, and even physical or mental breakdown. The best way to avoid it is to choose an environment that allows you to do the activities you enjoy, that are meaningful to you. Your friends, your work, and even your mate can be sources of challenging good stress or harmful distress.

Dr. Selye also believes that the absence of work isn't necessarily a way to avoid stress. An example of this is the retired person who finds him- or herself with nothing to do. Boredom then becomes an enemy capable of causing tremendous distress. Work is actually good for you as long as you can achieve something by doing it. It will only wear you out if it becomes frustrating because of failure or a lack of purpose.

To avoid distress you should seek work or tasks that:

- You are capable of doing
- You really enjoy
- Other people appreciate

## Body Reactions to Stress

Regardless of the source of stress, states Dr. Selye, your body has a three-stage reaction to it.

**Stage 1: Alarm**

In the alarm stage, your body recognizes the stressor and prepares for fight or flight. This is done by a release of hormones from the endocrine glands. These hormones will cause an increase in heartbeat and respiration, elevation in blood-sugar level, increase in perspiration, dilated pupils, and slowed digestion. You will then choose whether to use this burst of energy to fight or flee.

**Stage 2: Resistance**

In the resistance stage, your body repairs any damage caused from the stress. If however the stressor does not go away, the body cannot repair the damage and must remain alert. This plunges you into the third stage – exhaustion.

**Stage 3: Exhaustion**

If this stage continues long enough, you may develop one of the diseases of stress – migraine headaches, heart irregularity, or even mental illness. Continued exposure to stress during the exhaustion stage causes the body to run out of energy, and may even stop bodily functions.

Since you can't build a life completely free from stress or even distress, it's important that you develop some ways of dealing with stress.

Portions of Section 1 above were adapted with permission from Selye, H. (1976). *The stress of life* (pp. 1-14; 73-80). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

## Stages of Burnout

**Stage One: Enthusiasm**

- A period of exitement, hard work, and job satisfaction. Energy reserves are used up with this exuberance.

**Stage Two: Stagnation**

- Emphasis at work changes to a focus on personal needs, family, and friends.
- Job dissatisfaction and inefficiency increase.
- Escape activities like smoking, drinking, excessive eating, shopping sprees may be present ("I work hard. I deserve it.").

**Stage Three: Frustration**

- Negative feelings about the job and the organization grow more severe.
- Effectiveness on the job begins to suffer.
- Feelings of anger and depression can persist.

**Stage Four: Apathy**

- In response to feeling trapped in the position, minimal effort is exerted at work.
- Deep pessimism and self-doubt can be present.
- Physical illnesses can grow from minor discomforts to more serious symptoms.

**Stage Five: Intervention**

- In an attempt to break out of the dangerous burnout cycle, people often change jobs within the organization or move to a new organization, sometimes in a completely new field.
- A person's current working conditions can sometimes be modified to create a more acceptable and enjoyable environment.
- At this stage, it is important to begin balancing work life with personal life and leisure activities.

*Stages of Burnout* adapted with permission from Edelwich, J., with Brodsky, A. (1980). *Burnout: Stages of disillusionment in the helping professions.* New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc., 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013.

## Activity: *Burnout Test*

How have the following changed over the last 6 to 12 months? Using a 6 point scale (0-5), score 0 for no change and up to 5 for the greatest amount of change.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Do you tire more easily? Feel fatigued rather than energetic? | ____ |
| 2 | Are you working harder and harder and accomplishing less? | ____ |
| 3 | Are you increasingly cynical and disenchanted? | ____ |
| 4 | Do you often experience a sadness you can't explain? | ____ |
| 5 | Are you forgetting appointments, deadlines, personal possessions? | ____ |
| 6 | Are you increasingly irritable? More short tempered? | ____ |
| 7 | Are you seeing close friends and family members less frequently? | ____ |
| 8 | Are you suffering from physical symptoms (aches, pains, lingering illnesses)? | ____ |
| 9 | Are you unable to laugh at a joke about yourself? | ____ |
| | *Total* | ____ |

From *Burnout: The high cost of high achievement* by Herbert J. Freudenberger. Copyright © 1980 by Herbert J. Freudenberger and Geraldine Richelson. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

# Section 2
# *Stress Management*

### What Can I Do if Stress is Affecting My Job?

You should recognize that stress has a lifelong influence on you. What can you do about handling it? Doctors have come up with a few suggestions on how to live with stress.

1 **Work out stress:** If you're angry or upset, try to blow off steam physically by activities such as running, playing tennis, or gardening. Even taking a walk can help. Physical activity allows you a "fight" outlet for mental stress.

2 **Talk out your worries:** It helps to share worries with someone you trust and respect. This may be a friend, family member, clergyman, teacher, or counselor. Sometimes another person can help you see a new side to the problem and thus a new solution. It you find yourself becoming preoccupied with emotional problems, it might be wise to seek a professional listener, like a guidance counselor or psychologist. Doing this isn't admitting defeat, but rather is admitting you know when to ask for assistance.

3 **Learn to accept what you can't change:** If the problem is beyond your control at this time, try your best to accept it until you *can* change it. It beats spinning your wheels and getting nowhere.

- **Avoid self-medication:** Although there are many chemicals, including alcohol, that can mask stress symptoms, they don't help you adjust to the stress itself. Many are habit-forming, so the decision to use them should be made with your doctor. The ability to handle stress comes from within.
- **Get enough sleep and rest:** Lack of sleep can reduce your ability to deal with stress by making you more irritable. Most people need at least seven to eight hours of sleep out of every twenty-one hours. If stress repeatedly prevents you from sleeping, you should inform your doctor.
- **Be aware of what stresses you:** Notice how your body responds to stress. Think of the situations you're in that cause your body to react. What can you do in those situations to lessen the stress?
- **Examine your life-style:** Are you under stress because your priorities are out of order? Are you under stress because you're trying to do too much? What kind of balance do you need in your life to lessen the stress? What can you do about it? Make a list of aspects of your life that need to change to lessen the

stress in your life. Highlight the ones you can control. Make plans to start by changing just one of those.

- **Set realistic and achievable goals:** One way of becoming stressed is by trying to do too much. We often do that by over-scheduling or over-booking ourselves. Set realistic plans you can accomplish and feel good about afterwards.
- **Simplify your life in as many ways as possible:** Some ways to simplify are to get organized by grouping essential tasks and errands together, to ask for help when you need it, and to remain focused on your responsibilities.
- **Exercise:** When you exercise you feel better and you have more energy. Exercising is a great time to think about solutions to daily problems while relieving the stresses of the day. Set up a daily exercise program, no matter how simple.
- **Eat properly:** Eat regular, well balanced meals. This helps your energy level and helps you concentrate and keep a good perspective. Avoid overuse of caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes.
- **Change the way you start the day:** Make a plan for yourself to "get up on the *right* side of the bed". What does that mean for you? Think about how you can "spoil" yourself in some simple ways to make your day start out better for you.
- **Start the work day with the most difficult tasks:** When you have them behind you, you will feel a sense of accomplishment that will help you be more successful the rest of the day.
- **Realize you have choices.** If you have tried everything to alleviate the stress in your job, if you have given the job your very best, you may need to realize this job isn't for you. It's not a given that every job will work out. Some jobs just aren't healthy. Everyone has to strike their own balance with what works for them. You need to determine that and realize you have a choice to leave or stay. Maybe the best choice is another job.

*What Can I Do if Stress is Affecting My Job?* adapted with permission from training materials developed by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

## My Stress List

You can determine how much stress you're under in your current situation by completing the following questions. Check each item in either column that describes your current job. If you check five or more items in Column 1, you probably experience very little or no stress on your current job. You may find it routine or boring. You may need to seek activities to keep active. If you checked five or more items in Column 2, you're facing high stress levels and will probably want to look at strategies for reducing stress.

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|
| I don't have enough responsibility. | I have too much responsibility. |
| I have too much training for my job. | I wish I had more training so I could do a better job. |
| My job lacks variety. | My job is too challenging. |
| I often have too much time on my hands. | I don't have time to visit with friends because of my work. |
| I have to force myself to stay alert. | My work continues at so fast a pace that I have no recovery time. |
| I sometimes have to search for things to do. | I find I often have to take work home with me. |
| **Total** _____ | **Total** _____ |

*My Stress List* adapted with permission from Baron, R.A. (1983). *Behavior in organizations.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

## What is Relaxation?

It's surprising how little Americans know about the art of relaxation. Relaxation is more than getting away from the work day grind, and it's more than the absence of stress. It's sometimes positive and satisfying – a feeling in which one experiences peace of mind. True relaxation requires becoming sensitive to a basic need for peace, self-awareness, thoughtful reflection, and the willingness to meet these needs rather than dismissing them.

The continuing pressures of everyday life take a heavy toll on the physical and mental well-being of millions of people each year. Medical research into the origins of common diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, and headaches shows a connection between stress and the development of such ailments. In the area of mental health, stress frequently underlies emotional and behavioral problems, including nervous breakdowns. Various environmental factors — from noise pollution and air pollution to economic disruptions, such as unemployment, inflation, and recession — can make living conditions, even more stressful. These conditions, in turn, can create a greater need for mental health services to help people cope more effectively with their environment.

In the course of a day, people are frequently distracted from their activities by personal problems — conflicts with family members, disagreements with employers, poor living or working conditions, boredom, loneliness — to name just a few. It's easy to get so preoccupied with living, thinking, organizing, existing, and working that a person disregards his or her needs for relaxation.

Most people reared in our production-oriented society feel guilty or ill-at-ease when not involved in accomplishing tasks. Even their vacations become whirl wind productions that leave the participants exhausted after concentrating too many experiences into a short period of time. Such behavior undermines the value of vacation time as an opportunity for diversion, calm, restoration of one's energy, and gaining new experiences.

## Secrets of Relaxation

Unfortunately, some people pursue relaxation with the same concern for time, productivity, and activity that they show in their everyday life patterns. Far too few people know how to turn off their body clocks and gain satisfaction out of just being instead of always striving. The secret in getting the best results from attempts at relaxation is simple: Find those activities which give you pleasure, and, when you pursue them, commit your energies to total mental and physical well-being. If your diversion results in an artistic product, musical skills, further education, a better physique, or whatever, that's great. But remember that relaxation, not achievement, is your main reason for participating in the activity.

Mental health specialists have come up with some suggestions for learning the art of relaxation:

- **Try something new and different.** Keep in mind this important rules of thumb when deciding on relaxation activities: Don't be afraid to try something new and different. Choose activities you really enjoy, not activities you think other people want you to pursue. The following are some activities worth thinking about:

1 Check out various community activities available through recreation departments, adult education programs, volunteer work opportunities, college courses, etc.

2 Consider exercise such as walking around your neighborhood, bicycling, dancing, playing golf, swimming, gardening, bowling, etc.

3 For the more physically fit, more strenuous exercise can prove most relaxing. Jogging, playing tennis, basketball, handball, squash, etc., can give one a feeling of wonderful relaxation after an intense workout.

4 Try some mental exercises to create a sense of peace and tranquility in body and mind. One such exercise involves concentration on relaxing successive sets of muscles from the tips of your toes to the muscles in your forehead and neck. Other mental relaxation techniques include getting fully involved with a good book, drifting into a quiet state with music, or focusing on a beautiful scene or drawing and losing oneself in it.

5 Creative activities such as painting, drawing, pottery, carpentry, knitting, and even cooking for fun can also give you a sense of accomplishment, as well as the peaceful relaxation of concentration on something you wish to do.

6 Whether or not the above suggestions for relaxation work in your case, a sure-fire method known down through the ages is the use of a warm bath to take away bodily stress and strain. You may choose to enhance this activity by reading a good book, listening to music, or even adding some bubbles if you like.

*Secrets of Relaxation* reprinted with permission from the Marketing Department, Boynton Health Services, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

## Circle of Friends

One of the best ways to alleviate stress and burnout is to have a good circle of friends. The following exercise is a good way for you to determine just who is in your circle of friends. Your instructor will give you directions.

# *Summary*

Everyone experiences stress and distress from time to time in their lives. Paraprofessionals working directly with individuals with disabilities and their families often find themselves in demanding and stressful situations. It is important to identify the situations in which you typically feel stress and to develop strategies to avoid or alleviate that stress. Strategies such as exercising, getting enough sleep, meditating, and setting realistic, achievable goals are some ways that can help alleviate stress in your life. Friends are also a good source for dealing with stressful situations. Sometimes a sympathetic ear is enough to help you put things in perspective.

# *Questions to Ponder*

- What strategies have been most successful for you when dealing with stress?
- When do you feel most relaxed? What factors contribute to that feeling of relaxation? Can any of those factors be transferred to other situations in your life?
- What physical reactions do you feel when you are stressed?

# Appendices


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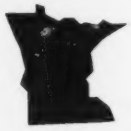
## Appendix A
# *The Individualized Education Plan*



**IEP Meeting Date:** _____
**IEP Written Date:** _____
**Last Assessment Summary Report Date:** _____
**Progress Report Frequency:** _____

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

## A. STUDENT INFORMATION

| Student's Name | Sex M F | Grade | Birthdate | ID Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| Street Address<br>City, State, Zip | Native Language/Primary Communication Mode |
|---|---|
| | |

| School of Enrollment | School Telephone ( ) | Providing District Number |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Student's Permanent Resident Address (if different) | Resident District Number |
|---|---|
| | |

## B. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

| Parent(s)' Name(s) | Home Telephone ( ) | Daytime Telephone ( ) | School District Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| Parent's Address (if different) | Native Language/Primary Communication Mode |
|---|---|
| | |

| Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Name(s) | ❑ Guardian(s) | ❑ Surrogate Parent(s) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Guardian(s)/Surrogate Parent(s) Address (if different) | Home Telephone ( ) | Daytime Telephone ( ) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

## C. IEP INFORMATION

| IEP Manager Name & Title | Telephone Number ( ) | Type of IEP: ❑ Initial ❑ Annual ❑ Interim |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Primary Disability | State Code | Secondary Disability(ies) | State Code(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

## D. IEP TEAM MEETING

| Title | Names of All Team Members | Indicate Attendance |
|---|---|---|
| Parent | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Parent | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Student | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| School District Representative | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| Special Education Teacher | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| General Education Teacher (K-12 Only) | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |
| | | ❑ Yes ❑ No |

*A copy is sent to the student's resident district when the student is not a resident of the providing district.*

Copies: Due Process File IEP Manager
Parent

This form is available in several languages, Braille, or other format. Contact the director of special education.

 Student's Name: _____

| E.1 | PROGRAM PLANNING |
|---|---|
| *Following initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.* | |

How the student's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the K-12 **general curriculum**:
(for students using Braille, includes how Braille will be implemented through integration with other classroom activities)
For **preschool** children or students age **18 – 22**, how the disability affects participation in **appropriate activities**:

**Summary of Strengths and Concerns (Optional)**

Student's **strengths:**

**Educational concerns** of parent(s) and student:

For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, how the student's **interests** and **preferences** were **considered** and **included** if the student did not attend this IEP meeting:

 Student's Name: _____

**E.2 PROGRAM PLANNING**

**Performance Areas**

- ❑ Intellectual/Cognitive Functioning
- ❑ Academic Performance
- ❑ Functional Skills
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Motor Skills
- ❑ Emotional, Social, and Behavioral Development
- ❑ Sensory
- ❑ Health/Physical

***For students by grade nine or age 14 or older, use section E.3 (Transition Program Planning).***

***Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.***

**Present Level(s) of Educational Performance:**

**Student-based Needs:**

**Annual Goal:**
___ of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

**Annual Goal:**
___ of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

 Student's Name: _____

| E.3 | TRANSITION PROGRAM PLANNING |
|---|---|

**Transition Areas** *(All areas must be addressed.)*

- ❑ Employment
- ❑ Post-Secondary Education & Training
- ❑ Community Participation
- ❑ Recreation/Leisure
- ❑ Home Living/Daily Living

***Following the initial assessment or a reassessment, the Assessment Summary Report may be attached to the IEP.***

**Future Outcome/Goal:**

**Present Levels of Performance:**

**Student-based Needs:** *(for instruction, experiences, and related services)* ***If no need, provide rationale.***

**Activities Planned to Meet Future Outcome/Goal:** *(school courses/standards; home, community, and work experiences; and/or related services)* ***Identify who is accountable for each activity.***

**Annual Goal:**
___of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

**Annual Goal:**
___of ___ Goals

**Short Term Objectives or Benchmarks:**

**Progress Notes:**

 Student's Name: _____

## E.4 PROFILES OF LEARNING

See documentation attached to this IEP.

## F. ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

**F.1** **Adaptations** and the duration of these adaptations, including supplemental aids and services to be used in general and special education that will be made available **to the student** (e.g., grading, staff, transportation, facilities, materials, equipment, assistive technology devices and services, curriculum, methods, coordination of support services, vocational services and equipment, limited English proficiency services, school discipline policy, paraprofessional services, and other services):

**F.2** Program modifications or supports for **school personnel** that will be provided to meet the student's identified needs:

## G. RIGHTS AT AGE OF MAJORITY

*Address **only** in IEPs for students who will reach age 17 during the tenure of this IEP.*

❑ The student, upon reaching age 17, has been informed of the rights which will transfer to him/her upon reaching the age of majority (18), unless legal guardian or conservator has been appointed.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

 Student's Name: _____

## H.1 MINNESOTA STATEWIDE TESTING

***Address only in IEPs developed for grades 3, 5, 8, 10+.*** Grade level to be covered: _____

*(Check the appropriate box.)*

A. ❑ If applicable, the team plans for the following **accommodations** for test administration:
(Test **modifications** are not allowed for Statewide Testing.)

B. ❑ Student is **exempt**. The alternate assessment will be used.

1. Rationale for exemption:

## H.2 BASIC STANDARDS TESTING

***Address only in the IEP for grade 8 or above.***

Prior to Basic Standards Testing, the team determined the following standards for this student:

**Accommodations** if appropriate or if needed:

**Modifications** if appropriate or if needed:

If **exempt**, the reason:

If **exempt**, the alternate assessment(s) to be used:

*Check the appropriate box to indicate the level the student will attempt for testing:*

| | State | Individual * | Exempt ** | Passed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading: | | | | |
| Math: | | | | |
| Writing: | | | | |

* If the modification is to alter the district's passing level, **test score expected** to be achieved is entered.
** If the student is **exempt,** the goals on the IEP will be the criteria for awarding the diploma.

 Student's Name: _____

## I. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES TO MEET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Instruction or Service Provided | Location | | Anticipated Frequency | Total Minutes Per Week | | Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | General Education | Special Education | | Indirect | Direct | Start Date | Anticipated Duration |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

## J. EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

**I.3** Are **extended school year services** required for this student? ❑ Yes ❑ No

**If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

## K. INTERAGENCY SERVICES

| Agency Name | Interagency/Organization Linkages *(Identify services, funding, responsibilities, etc.)* |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

## L. ALTERED SCHOOL DAY

Has this student's day been altered? ❑ Yes ❑ No **If yes**, reasons are described here or attached.

 Student's Name: _____

## M. PLACEMENT DETERMINATION: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

### M.1 Activities With Students Without Disabilities

*Check the appropriate box(es).*

If in K-12, activities in which the student will be participating with students who do not have disabilities:

❑ **All** the following activities

❑ Core Subject Areas : _____

❑ Art
❑ Music
❑ Library
❑ Physical Education
❑ Assemblies
❑ Lunch
❑ School to Work
❑ Recess
❑ Field Trips

❑ Extracurricular Activities: _____

❑ Other: _____

### M.2 LRE Justification

**Other options** considered and why rejected, and **why** this student's disability requires service(s) in this setting:

### M.3 Federal Child Count Setting

*Check the appropriate box:*

| K – 12 + | | Setting | | ECSE Age 3 to Kindergarten Entrance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General Education (In special education less than 21%) | → | ❑ I. | ← | Early Childhood Setting or Homebased |
| Resource Room (21 to 60%) | → | ❑ II. | ← | Parttime EC Setting or Home and ECSE or Reverse Mainstreaming or Itinerant Services |
| Separate Class (more than 60%) | → | ❑ III. | ← | ECSE Classroom |
| Public Separate Day School | → | ❑ IV. | ← | Public Separate Day School |
| Private Separate Day School | → | ❑ V. | ← | Private Separate Day School |
| Public Residential | → | ❑ VI. | ← | Public Residential |
| Private Residential | → | ❑ VII. | ← | Private Residential |
| Homebased/Homebound/Hospital | → | ❑ VIII. | ← | Homebound/Hospital |

***Note: Provide Notice of Proposed Special Education Services***

# Appendix B
# *Information from the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium*

*http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

## State Laws Regarding Paraprofessionals

**State of Minnesota, Omnibus Education Bill of 1998**
**Article 2, Section 9**

(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

1. before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students which whom the paraprofessional works;
2. annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities; and
3. a districtwide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

## Guiding Principles for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

These principles were used to guide the development of competencies for Minnesota paraprofessionals during the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998.

- Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student-related activities.
- The entire instructional team participates within clearly-defined roles in a dynamic, changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.

- To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- By recognizing a paraprofessional's training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified and which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

## Core Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

The following core competencies are expected of all paraprofessionals working in Minnesota schools. These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed above. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

**Core Competency Statements**

K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education** | | | |
| **K1** A sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions and values across cultures and the effect of the relationships among children, families, and schooling. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to individual learning needs. | | | X |
| **K3** Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding of the purposes and goals of education for all individuals. | | | X |
| **K5** Awareness of responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures. | | X | |
| **S1** Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

| **2. Characteristics of Learners** | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K1** Awareness of the similarities and differences among the cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs. | | | X |
| **K2** Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on an individual's life and family in the home, school, and community. | | | X |
| **K3** Awareness of characteristics and effects of the cultural, linguistic, and environmental background of the child and family. | | | X |
| **K4** Understanding of the effect of medications commonly prescribed for individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of the educational implications of the above factors. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of district's ability to provide for and use the tools of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. | | X | |
| **S1** With direction from a professional, make and document observations appropriate to the individual with learning needs. | | | X |
| **S2** Provide objective documentation of observations to appropriate professionals. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **4. Instructional Content and Practice** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of learning styles of individuals. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the demands and expectations of various learning environments. | | | X |
| **K3** Awareness of a variety of instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials. | | | X |
| **S1** Establish and maintain rapport with learners. | X | | |
| **S2** Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives. | | | X |
| **S3** Under the direction of a professional, assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the learner. | | | X |

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **S4** Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **5. Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of the environmental factors that affect teaching and learning, including health and safety issues. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning. | | | X |
| **K3** Understanding of strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of individuals with learning needs in various settings. | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness by the paraprofessional of how they impact the overall learning environment for students and staff. | | X | |
| **S1** Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy, learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures. | | X | |
| **S2** As directed, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning. | | | X |
| **S3** Use strategies that promote the learner's independence. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |
| **6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of behaviors. | | X | |
| **K3** Awareness of the factors that influence the behavior of individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of effective instructional practices that enhance the development of social skills. | | X | |
| **K6** Awareness of the range and implications of management approaches/strategies that influence the behavior of individual's with learning needs. | | X | |

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K7** Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behaviors. | | | X |
| **S2** Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior. | | | X |
| **S3** Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate. | | | X |
| **S4** Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **K1** Awareness of typical concerns of parents of individuals with learning needs. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of the roles of individuals with learning needs, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program. | | X | |
| **S1** Use ethical practices for confidential communication about learners with learning needs. | | X | |
| **S2** Under the direction of a professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments. | | | X |
| **S3** Follow the instructions of the professional. | | X | |
| **S4** Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel. | | | X |
| **S5** Participate as requested in conferences with families or primary caregivers as members of the educational team. | | | X |
| **S6** Use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities. | | | X |
| **S7** Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families. | | | X |
| **S8** Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences. | | | X |

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| Additions: | | | |
| **8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices** | | | |
| **K1** Recognition of the paraprofessional as a positive role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential. | X | | |
| **S2** Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel. | | X | |
| **S3** Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraprofessional. | | X | |
| **S4** Demonstrate respect for culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of students. | X | | |
| **S5** Demonstrate a willingness to participate in ongoing staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback. | X | | |
| **S6** Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including oral and written communication. | X | | |
| **S7** Practice within the context of written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed. | | X | |
| Additions: | | | |

Core competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998, and are based on the competencies found in: Council on Exceptional Children (1998). *What every special educator must know, 3rd ed.* Minneapolis, MN: Author. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para.*

## Specialized Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

In addition to the core competencies, the following specialized competencies are expected of paraprofessionals working in specific positions (early childhood, transition to work, behavior management, academic program assistants, and physical/other health impairments). These were developed during the State Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998 and are based on the guiding principles listed on page 91. Also being developed are skill assessments, training packages/resources, and other tools that districts can use to support and train paraprofessionals.

**Early Childhood**
**Specialized Competency Statements**

K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Early Childhood, Home Visitor Programs** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children. | | | X |
| **K2** Understanding of their role in listening and communicating with parents to gather information which the service delivery team can build on to meet the needs of the child and family. | X | | |
| **K3** Awareness of health care providers, social services and other resources available in the community to assist parents and their child. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding their role in enhancing parent interactions with their child by demonstrating effective techniques/materials to stimulate cognitive, physical, social and language development. | | X | |
| Additions: | | | |
| **2. Early Childhood,Center Based Programs** | | | |
| **K1** Awareness of basic developmental stages, ages 0-5. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of their role as a member of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team responsible for developing and implementing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children. | | | X |
| **S1** Ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play, and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to gather information about the performance of children in all areas of development and to share it with professional colleagues. | | X | |
| **S3** Demonstrate competence in preparing and using developmentally appropriate materials, under the direction of a professional. | | X | |
| **S4** Demonstrate an understanding of the paraprofessional's role in communicating and working effectively with parents, other primary caregivers, and team members. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Transition to Work and Adult Life**
**Specialized Competencies**
K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Transition to Work and Adult Life** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of the need for transition-related services. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of how to access information on community resources available to individuals with disabilities of transition age and their families. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of the importance of inter-agency collaboration. | | X | |
| K4 Knowledge of the ethical and legal standards of conduct in relationships with students, parents, adult service providers, employers, and coworkers. | | X | |
| **S1** Understanding of transition-related assessment strategies and ability to provide team with information useful to the development of transition-related goals and objectives. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to facilitate and support student involvement in decision making. | | X | |
| **S3** Ability to identify and develop accommodations and natural supports in the work setting. | | X | |
| **S4** Knowledge of and ability to provide instruction and support in leisure skills, social skills, self-determination skills, community mobility skills, and independent living skills. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to provide instruction and support in work-related behaviors, job-seeking skills, and job-specific skills in school or at a community work site. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Behavior Management**
**Specialized Competency Statements**

K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Behavior Management** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of personality and social/emotional development. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of behavioral/emotional challenges and the interaction with other disabilities. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of the need for utilizing formal and informal assessment strategies in obtaining information necessary for educational and behavioral programming for individual students. | | X | |
| **K4** Understanding of the rationale, components, operation and evaluation of the program models in which they are working. | | X | |
| **S1** Ability to document change in learner behavior in both academic and social areas. | | X | |
| **S2** Ability to observe and record pupil behavior utilizing different social rating systems. | | X | |
| **S3** Demonstrate the use of different methods to change and maintain behavior. | | X | |
| **S4** Ability to implement remedial techniques in academic skill areas with learners. | | X | |
| **S5** Ability to use materials designed for skill development in the social areas. | | | X |
| **S6** Ability to collaborate effectively with team members. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Academic Program Assistants**
**Specialized Competency Statements**

K=Knowledge S=Skill

| | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Academic Program Assistants** | | | |
| **K1** Knowledge of the paraprofessional's role and function in the specific academic setting. | | X | |
| **K2** Awareness of Minnesota Graduation Standards, including state testing and high standards as outlined in student IEPs. | | X | |
| **K3** Awareness of factors which influence cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. | | X | |
| **K4** Knowledge of educational terminology related to specific program or age level. | | X | |
| **S1** Ability to instruct students in academic subjects using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers and other professional staff. | | | X |
| **S2** Ability to gather and record data about the performance and behavior of individual students. | | X | |
| **S3** Ability to confer with special and general education practitioners about individual student schedules, instructional goals, progress, and performance. | | X | |
| **S4** Ability to use developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods and reinforcement techniques. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to effectively use available instructional resources including technology, as directed by the professional. | | X | |
| **S6** Understanding of various learning styles and the ability to implement corresponding teaching methods. | | | X |
| **S7** Demonstrate the ability to implement techniques to include students in general education as outlined in IEPs. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

**Physical and Other Health Impairments**
**Specialized Competency Statements**

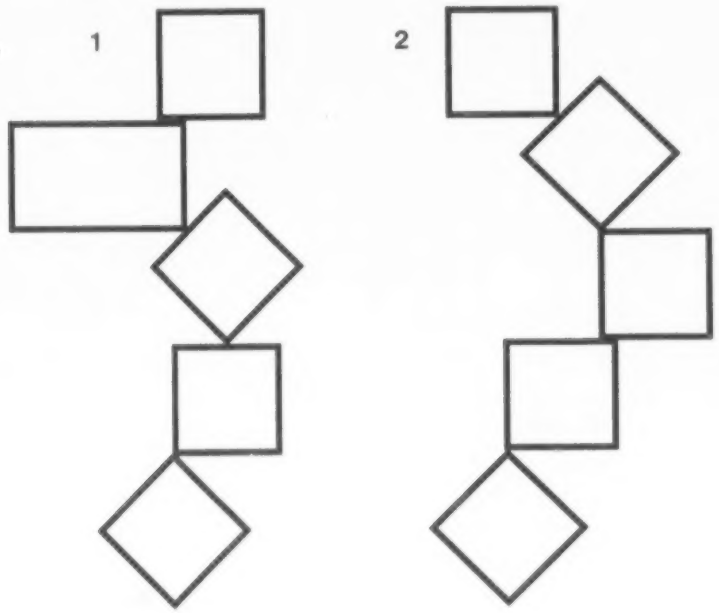
| K=Knowledge S=Skill | prior to employment | within first 2 weeks | within 45 school days |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Physical and Other Health Impairments** | | | |
| **K1** Understanding of specific student environments and learning modification/ accommodation strategies. | | X | |
| **K2** Understanding of medical conditions and emergency procedures for specific students, including care for seizures, latex allergies, catheterizations, tracheotomies, gastrostomies, ventilators, etc. | | X | |
| **K3** Understanding of proper storage, documentation, administration, and side effects of specific student medications. (NOTE: specific training is required to administer medication.) | | X | |
| **K4** Awareness of specific student transportation issues and emergency evacuation procedures. | | X | |
| **K5** Awareness of legal and liability issues specific to vulnerable and medically fragile students. | | X | |
| **S1** Demonstrate competence in the use of proper body mechanics for self and specific student when transferring, lifting and positioning that student. | | X | |
| **S2** Demonstrate competence in implementation, safety, and maintenance of all necessary adaptive, assistive, and instructional technology and equipment. | | | X |
| **S3** Certification in age appropriate CPR (infant/ child, adult) and Basic First Aid, and the ability to respond appropriately during an emergency situation. | | | X |
| **S4** Ability to properly assist students with activities of daily living, including toileting, feeding, dressing, and mobility. | | | X |
| **S5** Ability to implement strategies that encourage student independence and participation in all areas of development and classroom learning. | | | X |
| Additions: | | | |

Specialized competencies were developed by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Retreat in January, 1998. They can also be found at — *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/para*

# Appendix C
# *One-Way & Two-Way Communication*

Describe diagram 1 (on the left) to the students.

- Tell them to draw the diagram following your instructions as closely as possible.
- You may tell them only once. You may not use gestures.
- Students may not ask questions, talk to one another, or look at one another's papers.




Once they've completed this task, move on to the "Two-Way Communication" exercise.

Describe diagram 2 (on the right) to the students.

- Tell them to draw the diagram following your instructions as closely as possible.
- You may repeat your directions as often as needed.
- Students then may ask questions, get clarification, and use gestures to help them understand the diagram.

Leavitt, H.J. (1974). One-way & two-way communication. In Pfeiffer, J.W. & Jones, J.E. (Eds). *A handbook of structured experiences for human relations training (volume I, revised)*, pp 17-18. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishers/Jossey Bass, Inc. Copyright © 1974. All rights reserved. For ordering information, contact Pfeiffer Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. 1-800-956-7739.

# *Appendix D*
# *Administering & Interpreting the ELSIE*

**Directions** (to be read aloud to students by facilitator)

This exercise is designed to identify how individuals learn most easily and most efficiently. This isn't a test and there are no right or wrong answers. In this exercise, you'll hear a total of fifty single English words. Each word is a common word with which you are likely to be familiar. As you hear each word, observe your own immediate reaction – notice what goes on inside your mind. For each word, you will probably have an activity, picture the word spelled out in your mind, hear the word and understand its meaning based on the sound, or have some physical or emotional feeling about the word, such as a tightening of a muscle or a feeling such as warmth or sorrow. This isn't a test of word association; it's not important which other word or what picture might spring to mind. The nature of your own immediate reaction to the word itself is the important data.

Check the box on your answer sheet in the appropriate letter column for your response to each word. Each word will be read only one time since the important answer is your immediate response when you first hear the word rather than what comes to you after a few seconds' thought or a second hearing.

Here's an example. You hear the word *hold*. One person might visualize the hold of a ship or see one wrestler holding another. In this case, he or she would check letter "A". Notice that is doesn't matter what the picture is, only that the word immediately brings to mind some visual image. Another person might see the word spelled out: h-o-l-d. He or she would check "B". A third person might have no visual image at all, but simply hears the word and understands its meaning from the sound alone. He or she would check "C". Finally, still another person might feel – just for an instant – his or her arm muscles tense as if holding an object or as if someone were holding him or her. In either case, he or she would check letter "D".

Let's try a few words as samples. Don't mark your sheet for these. First word: *sink* (pause).

Did you see a kitchen sink? A ship sinking in the water? A truck with its wheels sinking in the mud? If you had any such image, you

*ELSIE* used with permission from Reinert, H. (1976). One is worth a thousand words... not necessarily! *Modern Language Journal, 60*(4). This exercise is copyrighted; for permission, contact Harry Reinert, 17429 95th Place SW, Vashon, WA 98070. More information on the *ELSIE* can be found at the following Web site — *http://www.newhorizons.org/toolrm_reinert.html.*

would check A. Or did you see *sink* spelled out in your mind? If so, you would have checked B. If you saw no visual image, then you would have checked C. Did you have a momentary sinking feeling in your stomach one gets on a descending elevator? If so, you would have checked D. See how it works?

Here's another example: *meat*. This word could be either a noun – like a roast or hamburger – or a verb, as to encounter someone – *meet*. No matter which meaning struck you first, you would have checked the box for A. If you saw either word spelled out, then you would have checked B. Again, whatever meaning you attached to the word, if you did not have a visual image, you would check C. If you felt like doing something like chewing or shaking hands, then you would have checked D.

Let's try practicing one final word before beginning the exercise: *home*. Did you see a house? Then you would check A. Did you see the word spelled out? Check B. If you heard the word but didn't see or feel anything, you'd check C. If just for an instant the sound of the word gave you a warm feeling made you feel more secure, or aroused any feeling, you'd check the box for D.

### Administration

Following the introduction above and a short discussion, explain that you will read each of the fifty words (see the opposite page) once at ten second intervals.

### Scoring

The learning style profile is provided by a chart at the end of this appendix on which students can plot their raw scores. At the bottom of the answer sheet are four blanks where students can tally their total responses for each of the four categories. On the profile sheet, place a dot under each heading at the appropriate spot according to the limits presented for each band. Connecting the four dots on the chart yields a graph.

### Interpretation

The basic assumption we make in interpreting these profiles is that the further the individual varies from the mean in any one of the four categories, the stronger or weaker will be that mode of learning is for that individual, which is to say the more (or less) easily the individual is able to learn by using that approach. Scores at the extremes (either in the ±3 or ±4 band) may be considered indicative of a strongly dominant influence – positive *or* negative – of the mode.

A score falling in the +4 range, for example, tends to indicate that the person must in some way translate information received from other modes into that category before successful learning will

occur. For example, if a person has a +4 score in listening, he or she will probably sound words while reading (since this converts the words into a more readily "digestible" form), and when watching a film he or she will learn more from the dialogue than from the pictures themselves. Conversely, a –4 score in listening would indicate that when that individual attends a lecture, he or she would feel compelled to engage in some other activity in order to remember what was said e.g., taking copious notes, converting the words of the speaker into visual images, etc.

## The Fifty Words

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 pool | 18 foot | 35 freedom |
| 2 tall | 19 justice | 36 letter |
| 3 summer | 20 baby | 37 think |
| 4 long | 21 enemy | 38 love |
| 5 house | 22 bag | 39 running |
| 6 guilty | 23 shame | 40 ugly |
| 7 chicken | 24 street | 41 law |
| 8 strange | 25 truth | 42 angry |
| 9 liar | 26 story | 43 friend |
| 10 beautiful | 27 happy | 44 paper |
| 11 grass | 28 ground | 45 warm |
| 12 hope | 29 hate | 46 above |
| 13 yellow | 30 talk | 47 kill |
| 14 fear | 31 ocean | 48 swim |
| 15 five | 32 good | 49 hungry |
| 16 god | 33 paint | 50 bad |
| 17 read | 34 down | |

## Learning Style Identification Exercise

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____

**Instructions:**
As each word is read, check the box indicating your response according to the following code:

**A** Mental picture of some object of activity. **C** Sound of words carries meaning.

**B** Mental picture of words spelled out. **D** Physical or emotional feeling about words.

| | A | B | C | D | | A | B | C | D | | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | 18 | | | | | 35 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | 19 | | | | | 36 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | 20 | | | | | 37 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | 21 | | | | | 38 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | 22 | | | | | 39 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | 23 | | | | | 40 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | 24 | | | | | 41 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | 25 | | | | | 42 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | 26 | | | | | 43 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | 27 | | | | | 44 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | 28 | | | | | 45 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | 29 | | | | | 46 | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | 30 | | | | | 47 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | 31 | | | | | 48 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | 32 | | | | | 49 | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | 33 | | | | | 50 | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | 34 | | | | | | | | | |

**Total Responses:** A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____

*ELSIE* used with permission from Reinert, H. (1976). One is worth a thousand words... not necessarily! *Modern Language Journal, 60*(4). This exercise is copyrighted; for permission, contact Harry Reinert, 17429 95th Place SW, Vashon, WA 98070. More information on the *ELSIE* can be found at the following Web site — *http://www.newhorizons.org/toolbx_reinert.html.*

## Learning Style Identification Exercise – Profile Sheet

| Band | A: Visualization | B: Written Word | C: Listening | D: Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| +4 | 38 | 20 | 22 | 26 |
| +3 | 34 | 17 | 17 | 20 |
| +2 | 29 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| +1 | 19 | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| 0 | 17 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| 0 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| -1 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| -2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| -3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| -4 | | | | |

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# References & Resources

# *References & Resources*

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